

The
Mennonite Brethren
Churches
of
North America

AN ILLUSTRATED SURVEY

Henry J. Wiens

T H E
Mennonite Brethren Churches
of
North America

AN ILLUSTRATED SURVEY

by

Henry J. Wiens

Field Secretary of the Board of Trustees of the Conference of
the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America and Solicitor
for the Conference Mission and Educational Endowment Fund,
1947—1952

Printed by
The Mennonite Brethren Publishing House
Hillsboro, Kansas
1954

Printed in U. S. A.



DEDICATION

*This book is dedicated
to the builders of the Church of Jesus Christ,
especially to those of the Mennonite Breth-
ren Conference, who labored and sacrificed
in order that the various local churches
could be established and expanded.*

PREFACE

During my travels as Solicitor for the Endowment Fund of the Mennonite Brethren Conference, it was my privilege to visit all the Mennonite Brethren churches in the United States, 53 in number, and all the Mennonite Brethren churches in the provinces of Canada, 80 in number. I was able also to take pictures of the church buildings in which these churches are at home.

Upon showing these pictures in various congregations, the suggestion was frequently made that they should be gathered into a book. Many people would be interested in such a collection, it was said. At first I hesitated, but soon the idea struck me favorably.

I sent out questionnaires to the leaders of the churches for the purpose of obtaining more definite information in regard to the time when the church was first organized, the number of members with which it began, the name of the first pastor or leader, the number of Sunday school classes, the number of extension stations, the number of missionaries that had gone from the church to the foreign field, the number of members at present, and the name of the present leader. The cooperation of the leaders in responding to the questionnaire was good. The brief write-ups that go with the pictures of the church buildings present the data collected in this manner.

In the preparation of the first chapter I read *The Mennonite Brethren Church* by John H. Lohrenz and the *Konferenz Beschluesse* of the conferences of the various years.

This booklet may truly be called a picture book, but even a picture book may have its value. This is especially true since the pictures show the houses of worship throughout the Mennonite Brethren Conference, the places where our own brethren meet from time to time for edification and praise. The pictures in the book are arranged according to

states and provinces rather than according to the order in which they were visited.

And now this book goes out. May it be instrumental in stimulating the members of the various churches to make all these places of worship true light houses from which the Light of the World, Christ Jesus, may be sent to all the people.

Henry J. Wiens

San Jose, California, July 1, 1954.

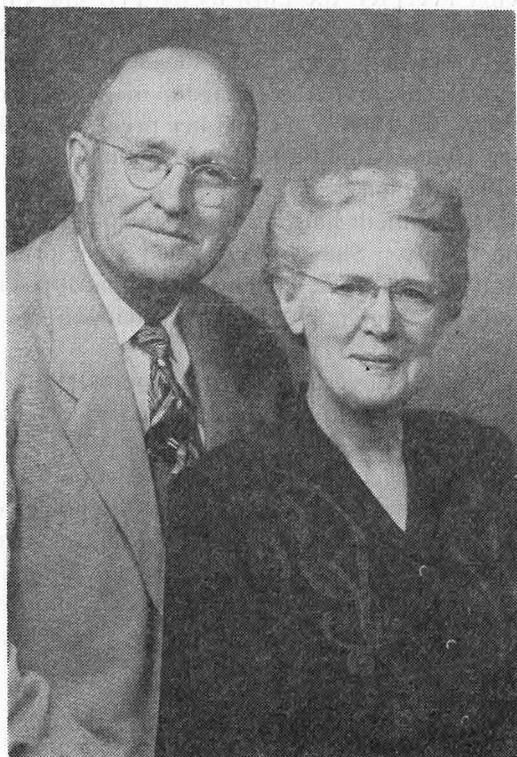
TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Preface	5
An Introduction of the Author.....	9
 Chapter 1. The Mennonite Brethren Church and its Mis- sionary Concern	 11
The Organization of the Mennonite Brethren Church in America	 11
The Early Missionary Activities of the Conference.....	12
The Mission Fund.....	13
Pioneers on the Mission Field of the Conference.....	14
 Chapter 2. On Tour for Mennonite Brethren Conference Missions and Education.....	 19
 Chapter 3. The Mennonite Brethren Churches of the Paci- fic District	 25
California	25
Oregon	48
Washington	49
 Chapter 4. The Mennonite Brethren Churches of the Southern District	 51
Colorado	51
Kansas	52
Oklahoma	65
Texas	81
 Chapter 5. The Mennonite Brethren Churches of the Central District	 86
Minnesota	86
Montana	89
Nebraska	91
North Dakota	99
South Dakota	103

Chapter 6. The Mennonite Brethren Churches in Alberta....	105
Chapter 7. The Mennonite Brethren Churches in British Columbia	116
Chapter 8. The Mennonite Brethren Churches in Manitoba	137
Chapter 9. The Mennonite Brethren Churches in Ontario....	159
Chapter 10. The Mennonite Brethren Churches in Sas- katchewan	171
Sunset	191

AN INTRODUCTION OF THE AUTHOR

The parents of Henry J. Wiens, Jakob and Marie Wiens, came to the United States on the steamship *Switzerland*, which brought to this country immigrants from South Russia. They landed in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on June 24, 1879. From here they went by train to Nebraska to join friends who had



Henry J. and Elizabeth Wiens, San Jose, California

earlier come to this country and there they settled on a farm near the little town of Bradshaw in York County.

On November 17, 1885, the son Henry was born to them. He was the youngest of seven children.

The little country school a mile from the old homestead furnished Henry the opportunities of an elementary school ex-

perience. He received his instruction in the German when his parents sent him to German school in the community where he was taught by teachers such as P. J. Friesen, Henry Klassen, C. J. Kliwer, J. S. Regier, and Isaac Doell. Often school attendance was interrupted by duties on the farm. Though much he would have liked to get a college education, it was never possible for him to attend a college.

Under the ministry of the late Missionary John H. Pankratz, who in 1900 conducted evangelistic services in the community, Henry accepted the Lord as his personal Saviour. He was baptized on April 8, 1901, by Elder Johann J. Regier.

Elizabeth Harder Wiens was the second of eleven children born to Martin and Anna Harder in Boone County, Nebraska, on May 16, 1884. In 1893 her parents with their family moved from Boone County to York County, Nebraska, and settled near Henderson.

As a girl Elizabeth had an important part in helping provide for the family. She worked much as a practical nurse and a general housekeeper, leaving little time for school. The teachers Peter P. Regier and Bernard Neuman instructed her in the German.

Elizabeth was converted under the ministry of Missionary John H. Pankratz and later baptized by Elder Johann J. Regier.

When in 1906 Henry J. Wiens and Elizabeth Harder were married, they made their home on the old homestead which Father and Mother Wiens had acquired when they came to this country in 1879. Here they brought up their family until 1920 when they left Nebraska with their seven children to make their new home near Reedley, California. California has continued to be their home since that time.

The Mennonite Brethren Churches of North America

An Illustrated Survey

Chapter 1

THE MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCH AND ITS MISSIONARY CONCERN

**"Diligent in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord."
(Romans 12:11)**

Simon Peter in reply to the question of Jesus, "But whom say ye that I am?" made the great confession saying, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," whereupon Jesus replied, "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16: 16-18).

Upon this confession of faith the Mennonite Brethren Church is founded. It is thus a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of which Jesus Himself says, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

The Organization of the Mennonite Brethren Church in America

The beginning of the Mennonite Brethren Church in America dates back to the year 1874 when the first members left their homes in Russia and settled in America. In 1878 one group organized in Kansas as the Ebenezer Church with the brethren Peter Wall and Franz Ediger to lead the church and to preach the Word. Elder Abraham Schellenberg became the leader of the church the following year. Another group met and worshipped in the Henderson, Nebraska, community with Rev. Peter Regier as the first minister. A group in Minnesota elected Rev. Heinrich Voth as leader and thus established the Bingham Lake Church. The church which later became the Silver Lake Church organized in South Dakota with Heinrich Adrian as presiding minister.

The first official conference of the Mennonite Brethren churches in America convened at Henderson, Nebraska, in 1879. Twenty-two delegates attended. These came from the churches in Kansas, Nebraska, Minnesota, and South Dakota to be present at the love feast and mission festival on Sunday and for business deliberations the following two days.

The churches met in conference annually until 1909 when the body was divided into district conferences with the provision that a general conference convene only once in three years.

Among the early leaders in the conference was Abraham Schellenberg, who presided at 18 conferences and traveled extensively in the interest of building the churches. He played an important part in the organization and administration of the various Conference activities. The elders Cornelius Wedel, Johann Foth and David Dyck from Kansas, Johann Regier from Nebraska, and Heinrich Voth from Minnesota were other outstanding leaders.

The growth of the Conference was continuous. New churches sprang up in the prairie section of the Middle West. The work in Canada was begun in the years 1888 and 1892 and soon there were a goodly number of churches in Canada. To present the churches of the Conference and their houses of worship as of today is the story of this book.

The Early Missionary Activities of the Conference

Home missions had an important place in the endeavors of the Conference during the early years. Workers were called, work assignments made, and offerings contributed to support the work. The first extension work of the Conference was undertaken in Manitoba.

From the very beginning there was present among the brethren a lively interest in foreign missions which made itself felt in conference sessions. The first specific reference to foreign missions on record is in the Report of the Conference of 1881 when the delegates voted to allow one-half of a mission offering on the festival Sunday or the amount of \$26.36 for the support of foreign missions.

At the conference in 1884 a letter from G. N. Thompson, a Baptist missionary in India, was read. In this letter the writer extended to the Mennonite Brethren Conference an invitation to participate in a mission work in India by contrib-

uting annually one hundred dollars which would support a native worker on the field. The Conference accepted the invitation. The following year two workers were supported on the India field. The Conference in 1885 elected a Mission Board of eight members with Rev. Cornelius Wedel as chairman.

The missionary activities of the Conference reached into Africa when in 1887 the support of a native worker of the Baptist mission in the Cameroon was voted.

The Mission Fund

The brethren at the conference in 1898 felt definitely the Lord's leading in inaugurating an independent mission work in a foreign country. The government, however, required a dependable source of financial support as a guarantee of support and stability for the mission work. This led to creating the Mission Fund. The goal for the fund was set at \$50,000, which amount was soon raised.

When in 1933 Tabor College was accepted as a Conference school, the support of education was placed on the endowment basis and what began as the Mission Fund came to be known as the Endowment Fund providing support for both the mission and educational activities of the Conference.

Henry A. Martens of Buhler, Kansas, a member of the Board of Trustees at the time, was appointed Solicitor for the Endowment Fund in 1933. He was an energetic worker covering the field extensively and accomplishing encouraging results. The Endowment Fund was raised to over \$300,000. Brother Martens continued the work of solicitation until he was unexpectedly stricken with illnesses while visiting the churches in Canada. He returned to his home in Buhler and, after a brief stay with his loved ones, he succumbed to his illness and went to be with his Master, whom he served so well.

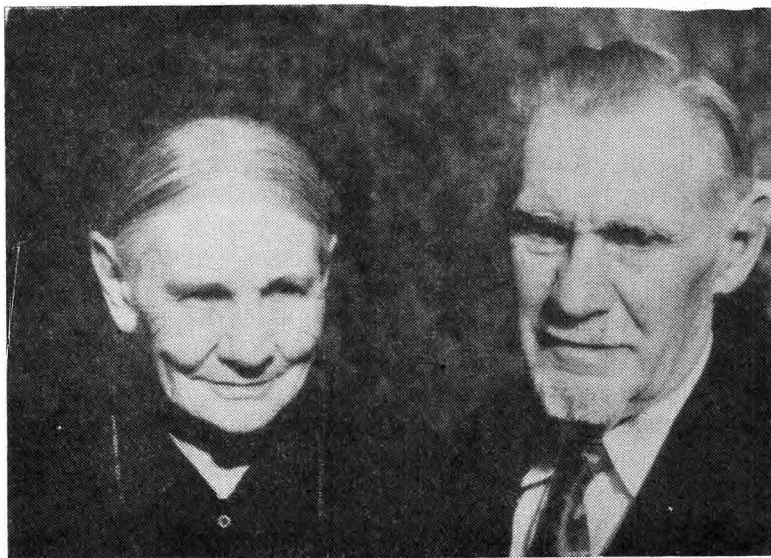
Brother Martens had many friends and supporters for the Endowment Fund. There were, however, many congregations that had not been contacted and in those that had been visited there were new families ready to be added to the roll of supporters of the endowment program. Prayers were made asking God to provide another worker in this important area of service.

Early in 1947 an invitation came to me to come to Hillsboro for an interview with the members of the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees. The Lord in the meantime had prepared me. The result of the meeting was that I was chosen Solicitor for the Endowment Fund. As soon as arrangements could be made, I was to go into the field. After returning to my home in San Jose, California, we at once began to make preparations for visits to the various churches in the interest of the Endowment Fund.

Pioneers on the Mission Field of the Conference

The missionaries shown in this section represent the work of missions in the beginning of the Mennonite Brethren Foreign Mission Program. Many others have gone out into various fields and are serving in many parts of the world under the Mission Board. These faithful servants are serving well. Some have gone to their reward. Lonely graves mark the resting places of these brothers and sisters who gave themselves and their lives in service to the King.

Thousands of indigenous Christians in foreign lands are now busy building the Church of Jesus Christ. No one shall be able to stop this work until His church is complete.



Rev. and Mrs. N. N. Hiebert, Hillsboro, Kans.

Rev. and Mrs. N. N. Hiebert were the first missionary couple to be sent by the Mennonite Brethren Conference of America to the mission field in a foreign country. They left for the field in India in 1899 and served for a period of one and one-half years, when because of illness, it became necessary for them to return to America.

Since his return from the field, Brother Hiebert has given valuable services in traveling and speaking in the interest of missions. He was also for many years an active member of the Mission Board.

The Hieberts at this time are at home in the Mission Home in Hillsboro. They are beneficiaries of the Missionary Pension Fund.

The pictures of the Hieberts was taken two years ago when the writer visited them in the Mission Home.



Deacon and Mrs. C. A. Wichert, Dinuba, California

Elizabeth Neufeld Wall Wichert sailed with Rev. and Mrs. N. N. Hiebert in 1899 as a missionary teacher for the field in India. She continued her teaching on the field after the Hieberts left and returned to America in 1906. After this one term of service she remained in America because of poor health. She became the wife of Brother Peter Wall who was

suddenly taken from her in a gas explosion. After a number of years she was married to Bro. C. A. Wichert. The Wicherts were at home in Dinuba where the sister passed away in 1953.



Anna Suderman Bergthold, Reedley, California

Anna Suderman Bergthold began her services as a missionary to India in 1898. The following year she joined the N. N. Hieberts and Elizabeth Neufeld in India as a missionary of the Mennonite Brethren Conference. She was married to Missionary Daniel F. Bergthold in India in 1916.

After returning from the mission field the third time the Bergtholds made their home in Alhambra, California, a suburb of Los Angeles. Brother Bergthold passed away in 1948. Sister Bergthold then made her home in the Home for the Aged in Reedley, California.

Rev. and Mrs. P. V. Balzer left America in March of 1954 for their fourth term of service on the mission field in India. When they left the first time in the year 1923, the writer had the privilege to take them to San Francisco from which port they sailed on their first missionary journey.

The two young brethren, Rev. H. S. Voth and Rev. F. J. Wiens were outstanding evangelists in the Conference. Both were students in the German Department of McPherson Col-



Rev. and Mrs. P. V. Balzer, Narayanpet, India



Rev. H. S. Voth and Rev. F. J. Wiens

lege, McPherson, Kansas, under the direction of Professor J. F. Duerksen.

H. S. Voth was the oldest son of Elder Heinrich Voth of Bingham Lake, Minnesota. He was married in Manitoba becoming the son-in-law of Rev. Heinrich Warkentin of Winkler. He served well as evangelist and gave many years of his life as member of the Mission Board.

F. J. Wiens was the son of Jakob Wiens of Henderson, Nebraska. He served the Conference as evangelist both in America and in Russia. In 1910 he and Mrs. Wiens began pioneer mission work in South China.

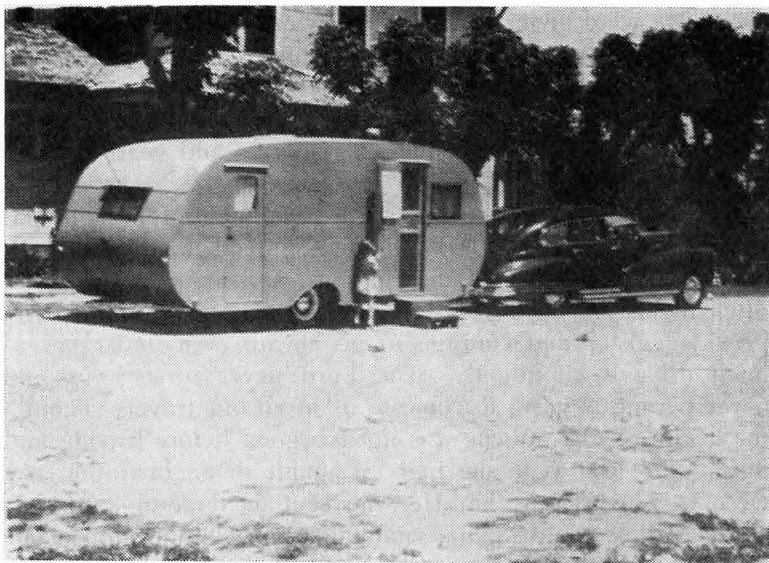
Both of these brethren have gone to their reward but their memory lingers in the hearts and minds of many.

“And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever” (Daniel 12:3).

Chapter 2

ON TOUR FOR MENNONITE BRETHREN CONFERENCE MISSIONS AND EDUCATION

After accepting the work as Solicitor for the Endowment Fund, we purchased a suitable house trailer and rented our home in San Jose. Now we moved into the trailer house. Every nook and corner was stuffed full of things. It was sur-



**Our Home for the Trips, Ready to Take Off at the Farm Home
at Reedley, California, in the Summer of 1947**

prising to see how much a good housekeeper could pack into such a house on wheels. Things a man would not think of were found and carefully placed and soon the many things needed in the life of travelers were there and in readiness. We were now to change over from a quiet home life to roaming the country.

The man's concern in such an enterprise has to do with how to pull the house behind the car and with seeing to it that there is gas in the tank. It is wonderful, however, to see how easily a car pulls a well-balanced house trailer. Despite the

many mountains between California and the Middle West, the trips between California and Kansas were made in four days and even a little less.

For nearly six years this was to be "Home Sweet Home" for us, except that during the winter months when the weather conditions were unfavorable, we settled in a more solid home. The first year, during which time we visited the churches in California, Oregon, and Washington, we remained in our trailer home throughout the winter.

This was a new way of life and had to be learned and liking it had to be learned. Had it not been for the cause to which we were giving ourselves, we would have hesitated very much before entering upon such arrangements. It is simple to move into one of these houses on wheels for a vacation where the vacationer wants to eat and sleep for a short time in his own place, but to live in it for months and years is quite another matter.

We looked forward to our travels with great anticipations. We know now that oftentimes the realization did not quite measure up to our anticipations, and we know also that often they were far beyond our anticipations. The Lord daily provided grace and courage to go ahead, even under occasional difficult conditions. The Lord never forsook us and never permitted harm to come to us in all our travels. Though the health of Mrs. Wiens was not too good before leaving and during the first year she had to submit to an operation, we were very conscious that He who sent us undertook for her and gave her health again, enabling us to continue to do our work together and from our little home.

When we ended our wanderings of more than five years, Mrs. Wiens urged me to sell the trailer house and not ever to bother to get another one. The house, however, had served its purpose well. We thank God that we could have it for our trips. We thank God for allowing us the many miles and miles of travel without serious accident.

July of 1947 was the time for us to begin our work. We left California and came to Hillsboro. Here we parked at the home of our children, the John J. Gerbrandts, who were then active in the position of Field Secretary for Tabor College. Several more weeks of preparation followed. And now we were on our way to the first station to do the actual work.

The program of visitation in the churches and homes had been carefully outlined by the Board of Trustees. The Sundays were to be used in acquainting the people with the Endowment Fund, the needs it served, the opportunities of help it afforded, and the manner in which it was used in building the Kingdom of God. The program of visits to the homes was also announced.

The first stops were to be made in smaller churches. Notices were sent to the churches in Western Kansas. With much fear and trembling and prayer we started West.

The church at Ingalls was to be our first place of work. It was a very hot day in July when we arrived and were welcomed by the pastor, Rev. D. J. Wiens. For the kind welcome of these dear people into their home and congregation, we are grateful to this day. We gained courage and confidence and had every assistance in getting started in our work. The members of the congregation too participated nobly in the work. Our prayer and God-bless-you in their behalf was easily uttered and most sincere. This week of going from home to home presenting the Endowment Fund and the many weeks that followed were a joy to us. The main part of the book will present the churches we visited in the course of our travels.

Our schedule called for visits to about one-half of the congregations in the Southern District before the winter weather would make travel difficult. We moved from place to place until the fall of the year of 1947 when we stopped in Hillsboro and took time out to attend the conferences of the Southern District at the South Fairview Church in Oklahoma and of the Central District meeting in Marion, South Dakota. Being present to hear the reports of how the Church of Jesus Christ is being built by His faithful servants is a blessing and an inspiration. Many of the brethren who were regularly seen at these conferences have in the course of the last years finished their work and gone to be with the Lord forever.

After these conferences we proceeded into Oklahoma once more to visit the remaining churches. Everywhere the people responded generously and the results were highly gratifying. After finishing the work in Oklahoma, it was time to "pull up stakes" and return to California for the winter months.

The mild climate of the Pacific states during the winter months furnished us the opportunity to visit the churches in California, Oregon, and Washington.

In the spring of 1948 we turned east again to finish the work in Kansas and to do our visits in our home state of Nebraska, in which are located our birthplaces and our early homes. Twenty-eight years had passed since we left Nebraska. A side trip from Western Nebraska into Colorado took us to the one church in that state.

The year 1948 was also the year of the convention of the General Conference in Mountain Lake, Minnesota. According to our plans we were to complete our visits in Minnesota before the conference in August. From under the large oak tree where we set up housekeeping adjoining the pastor's home in Mountain Lake, we travelled into all directions visiting the members of the congregations there. The kindly help given by Brother and Sister A. A. Dick who were neighbors on the other side was a tremendous encouragement. The days of fellowship and of work with these kind friends continue to be an inspiration to us.

The Board of Trustees had planned the visit to Alberta for the time after the Mountain Lake Conference. It was not possible to complete the arrangements for the visits to Alberta, however, so we were scheduled for the churches in North Dakota and South Dakota. We were able to finish the work here, although toward the end we found ourselves in rains and colder weather. Soon we were again on the way to our winter home in California.

On the return to California a stop-over in Hillsboro had been arranged. This enabled us to be present at the Southern District Conference convening in Hillsboro during the latter part of October and to visit our children. And now we were at last on our way to California to our new home in Dinuba where we spent the winter after having completed the visitation work in the Middle West.

The churches in the North were on the program of visits for the year 1949. On the first Sunday of June I arrived in Ontario. Here I visited the St. Catherines Church and then the other churches in Ontario. After a brief interruption I left for British Columbia and did my work there. When November 10 came I discontinued the work in British Columbia in

order to be able to attend the conference of the Pacific District which that year met at Dallas, Oregon. After the fine fellowship at the conference I returned to California to be at home during the Christmas season and the winter months.

The work in 1950 was not begun until later in spring. We were to spend our time visiting the churches in the North. We began with the work that had been left in British Columbia. After finishing here we remained in British Columbia for the convention of the Canadian Conference which met in the Clearbrook Mennonite Brethren Church near Abbotsford. This was another opportunity to meet many old friends and make new ones.

After the Canadian Conference we left to visit the churches in Alberta where we were to spend the remainder of the summer. Unexpected success and many blessings came to us in these visits. Upon the completion of our work here we left in the midst of rain and winter weather for the South to visit the two churches in Montana. We were able to finish the work in Montana and then we continued southward to spend our fourth winter during our period of service in our California home. On the way we were able to attend the Southern District Conference at Ebenfeld in Kansas and to enjoy a little rest in the home of the pastor of the Ebenfeld Church, Rev. and Mrs. J. J. Gerbrandt. We then started our trip to Dinuba, California, to celebrate Christmas at home and to do some physical work on the ranch.

We were to begin the last year of work on the first Sunday in June of 1951 in the province of Saskatchewan. We started in California in beautiful summer weather and by the time we came to Montana, while passing through a driving snowstorm, we were eating the cherries we bought in Lodi. On the appointed Sunday, however, we arrived in Saskatoon to begin the visits in Saskatchewan. A member of the Board of Trustees, Brother F. J. Baerg, arranged the itinerary and various brethren accompanied me in the work. Our last visit in Northern Saskatchewan was in the church at Watrous. On bad roads and in the midst of rain the people of the congregation came to the services and volunteered to make their pledges to the Endowment Fund there.

On the following day we moved into the Herbert District of Saskatchewan. We were able to complete the visits in this

area before the Canadian Conference which met in Herbert in the newly-erected auditorium on the Bible School grounds. After sharing in the blessings of this conference we left for Winkler, Manitoba, the place where the convention of the General Conference was to convene in August. Here we participated in the activities of various committees and the conference.

In consultation with the leaders of the churches in Manitoba, the Board of Trustees decided to postpone the work of solicitation in Manitoba until September. It was possible to finish the work here even though toward the end colder weather set in and when I left Winnipeg the ground was covered with deep snow. The visits to the churches were now completed with the exception of a few congregations in the Southern District.

The month of August in 1952 was used to complete the work in the Southern District. Rain in Oklahoma had been scant and the crops poor. The brethren, however, contributed and signed their pledges in the face of these conditions, so that the work could be finished.

A review of these years of visitations in the churches and in the homes has left me with the impression that our churches, our brothers and sisters, are doing a great work for the Lord and are doing it gladly. Sacrifices are being brought to further the Lord's work on the foreign field and in the homeland.

"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Galatians 6:9).

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

Chapter 3

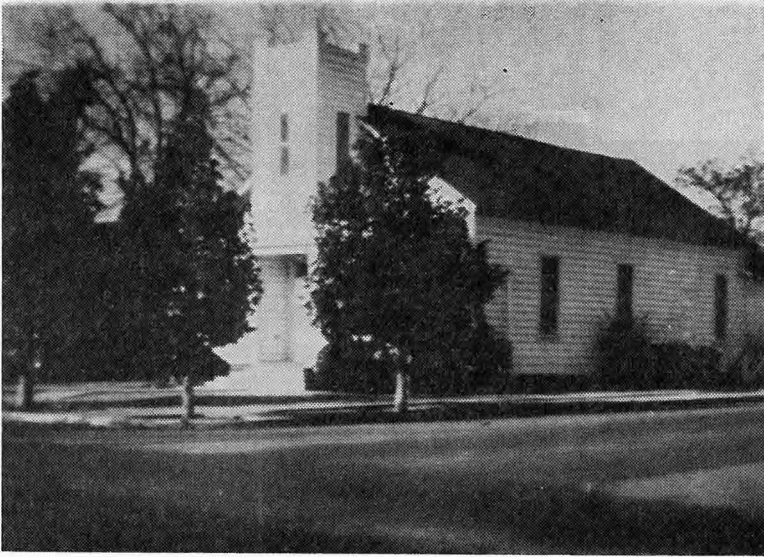
THE MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCHES OF THE PACIFIC DISTRICT CONFERENCE

California

California has 12 Mennonite Brethren churches. These belong to the Pacific District Conference.

Bakersfield

The Mennonite Brethren Conference membership had been growing rapidly on the Pacific Coast. Many of the brethren were beginning to look for work in other than the well estab-



Bakersfield Mennonite Brethren Church

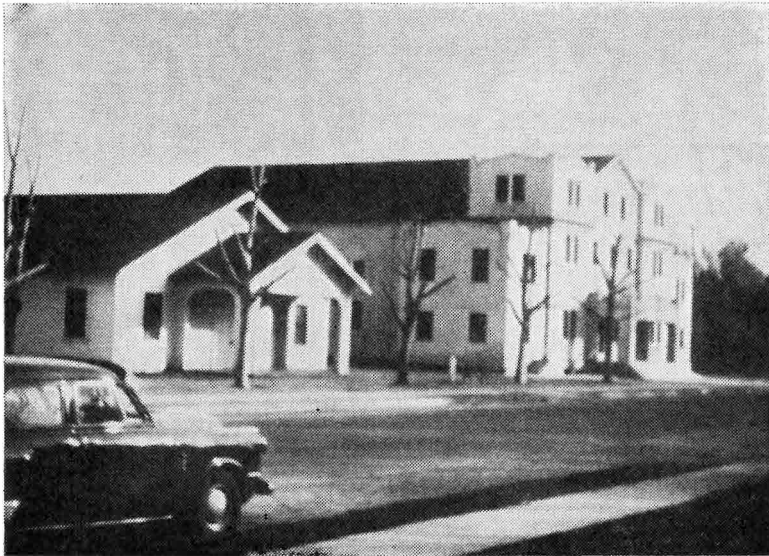
lished Mennonite Brethren communities. Some there were who found work in the city of Bakersfield. Bakersfield is a railroad center in which the shops of the Santa Fe and the Southern Pacific Railroads are located. A number of our brethren found and hold very good positions in these shops.

The Mennonite Brethren Church of Bakersfield was organized in 1913 with 35 members under the leadership of

Rev. B. F. Friesen, a son of Dr. Julius Friesen of Boone County, Nebraska. The church has a Sunday school program consisting of 16 classes and maintains one extension station. Four missionaries from the church are on the foreign mission field. Rev. Arthur Flaming, coming originally from the Central District, is the present pastor of the church of 190 members. The church building is located in East Bakersfield.

Dinuba

In the year 1920 and the years following many homeseekers came to the Reedley community. The church at Reedley



Dinuba Mennonite Brethren Church

was the largest church and attracted these newcomers and was soon filled to overflowing. A second church was organized on May 10, 1925, under the leadership of Rev. J. H. Richert with 150 members. This church found its home in Dinuba. It has grown to become the second largest church in California.

The church has 44 Sunday school classes and carries on eleven extension projects, where the members bring the gospel

to those who have no church ties. The membership numbers 604 and is served by Rev. B. J. Braun.

Recently the church erected a separate Sunday School Building on its spacious church grounds.



Rev. and Mrs. B. J. Braun, Dinuba, California

Rev. B. J. Braun came to Canada with his parents in the 1920's. He received his education in Tabor College and in the Southwestern Baptist Seminary at Fort Worth, Texas. After finishing his schooling, Rev. Braun became the pastor of the Mennonite Brethren Church at Delft, Minnesota. He served this congregation a number of years and then accepted the call to the church at Dinuba. Mrs. Braun is the daughter of the late Rev. Jacob Ewert of Mountain Lake, Minnesota. Rev. and Mrs. Braun have five children.

Rev. Braun has been the Chairman of the Mennonite Brethren Conference since 1948. He has served as member of the Board of Trustees of the Conference.

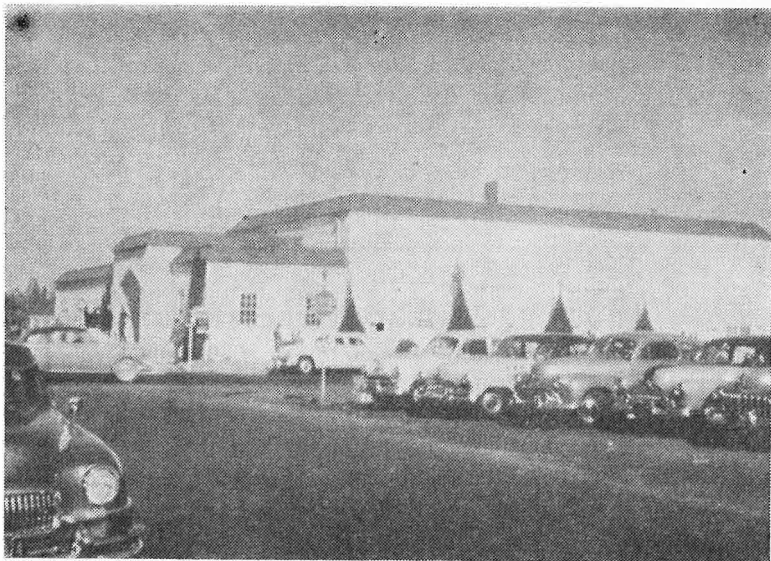
Fresno

Fresno, a city with a population of about 100,000 and located in the San Joaquin Valley of Central California, is known as the "fruitbasket of the nation." The Valley is shel-

tered from storms and a severe cold winter by the Coast Range and Sierra Nevada Mountains and thus has become one of the best fruit growing sections in the world.

The city is located on U. S. Highway 99 and can also be reached via the Santa Fe and the Southern Pacific Railroads and by air. The wonders of the Sierra Mountains and the many parks are within a few hours' travel by auto.

The population of California and especially its larger cities has been increasing rapidly during the last ten years. This increase in population has also had its effects upon the



Fresno Mennonite Brethren Church

Mennonite Brethren settlements. The crowded churches and the need for more jobs were responsible for a movement of the Mennonite Brethren people to larger centers of population. A group found jobs and established their homes in Fresno.

In January of 1943 the Fresno Mennonite Brethren Church was organized with 53 members and Rev. J. D. Hofer the first pastor. Today the church has a membership of 380. There are 28 Sunday school classes and one extension station. Eight missionaries from the church are on the foreign mission field. Rev. Dan Friesen is the pastor. Besides being the pas-

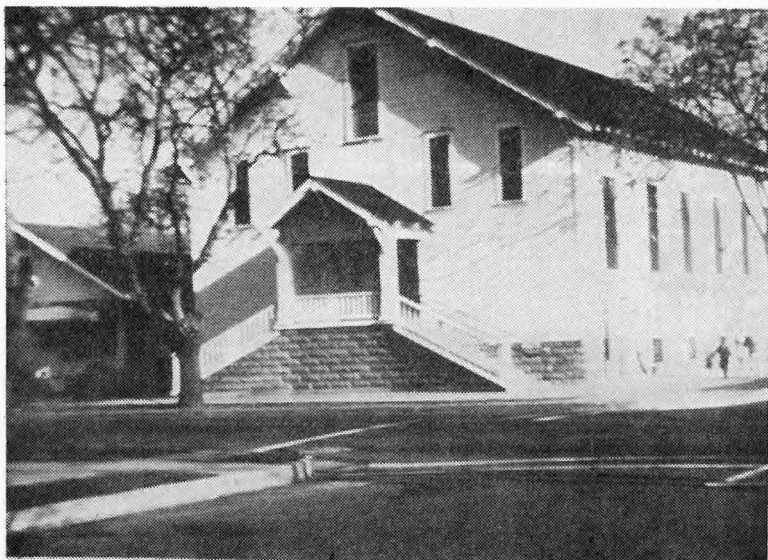
tor Rev. Friesen has served as chairman of the Pacific District Conference two terms.

The fine new church building of this congregation can be found on the corner of Olive and Orchard in the northeast part of Fresno.

The Pacific Bible Institute, owned and controlled by the Pacific District Conference, is located in Fresno and serves as an effective agency in attracting people to the city and to the church.

Lodi

A group of members from the Mennonite Brethren churches in Harvey, Goodrich, Sawyer, and other places in



Lodi Mennonite Brethren Church

North Dakota settled farther north in the San Joaquin Valley and near the thriving center of Lodi. Brother Knoll, the owner of large vineyards, started the settlement and others soon followed.

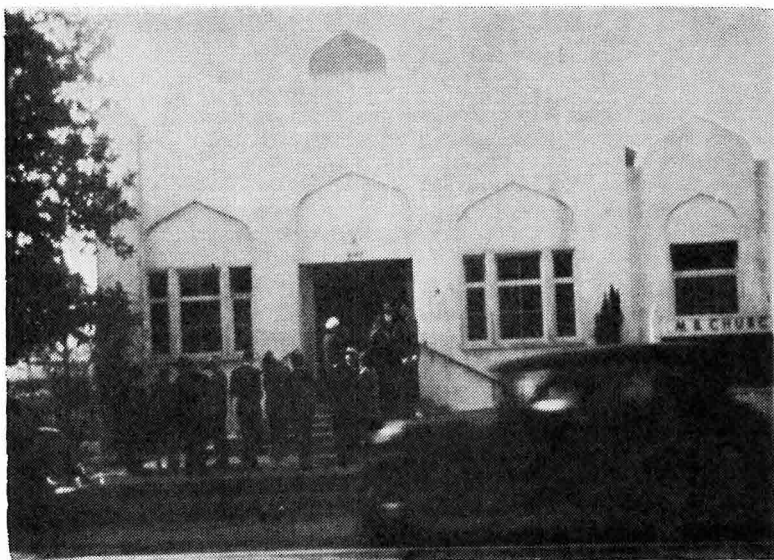
Lodi is a fruit-growing area. It is known the world over of the famous Tokay table grapes, which keep their firmness in shipping. Cherries are grown extensively. They ripen earlier in this region than in any other part of the San Joaquin

Valley. Lodi has a large German speaking population. It also has many churches.

The city of Stockton, 15 miles south of Lodi, is connected by canal with San Francisco making shipping by water to ocean-going steamers possible.

The Lodi Mennonite Brethren Church was organized on January 1, 1915, with 21 members under the leadership of Rev. Peter P. Rempel. There are nine Sunday school classes that are part of the program of the church. The church assists in a number of missionary projects. The membership at present is 100. Rev. H. H. Epp is the pastor.

Los Angeles



Los Angeles Mennonite Brethren Church

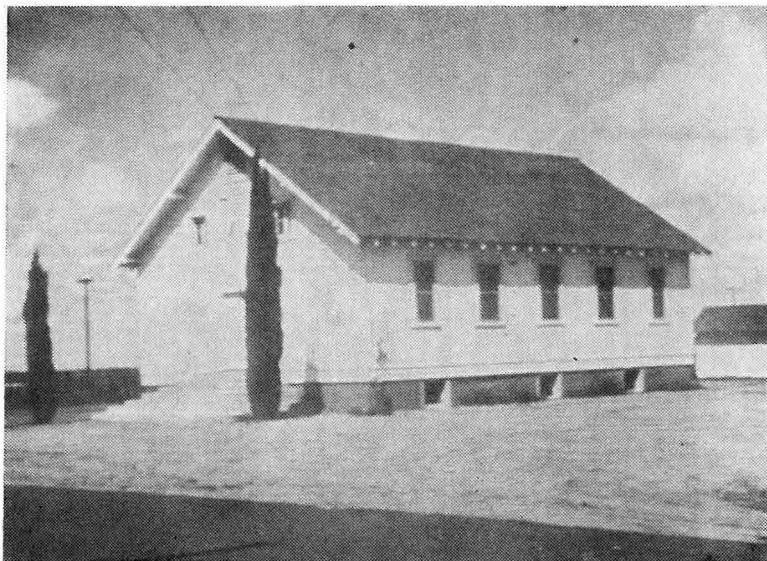
Los Angeles, a city of over a million people, is located in southern California near the Pacific Ocean. Highway 99 running north and south and Highway 66 running east and west lead to Los Angeles.

The Los Angeles Mennonite Brethren Church was founded in the early 1920's. Rev. P. P. Rempel and Rev. P. N. Hiebert were among the early leaders of the church.

According to the 1953 Pacific Conference Yearbook the membership of the church is 68. Rev. A. W. Friesen is the leader and Rev. P. F. Wall is the assistant leader. Long distances and travel in heavy traffic in the large city make it difficult for members of the Mennonite Brethren faith to be united in the one church.

Madera

Julius Siemens, a real estate agent, as early as 1913 publicized the new settlement at Fairmead. U. S. Highway 99 was



Madera Mennonite Brethren Church

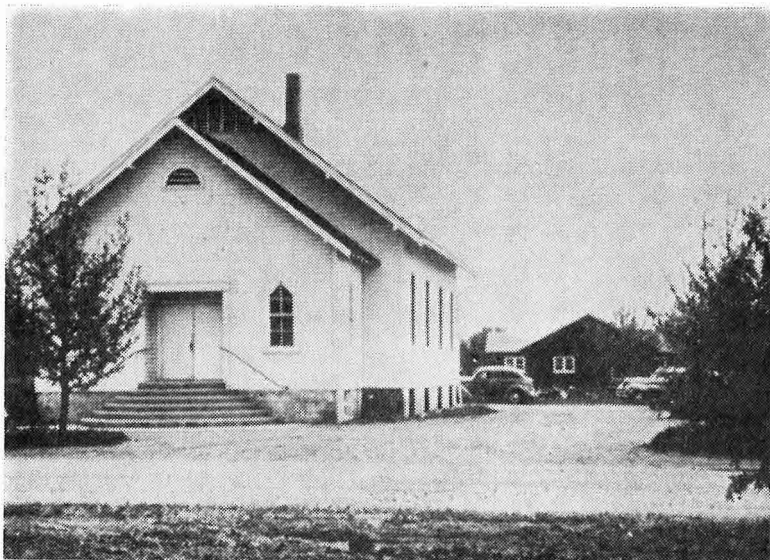
being built north of Fresno at the time and passed through this community. The agent made use of the new highway not only in his travels with the Model T Ford car, in which he was always seen, but also as a talking point in selling tracts of land in this part of the San Joaquin Valley.

In 1919 a group of ten members of the Mennonite Brethren Church organized as a congregation with Brother Peter

Wall, the first husband of Elizabeth Neufeld, the first missionary teacher of the Conference. The church today has 44 members and a Sunday school of nine classes. The church operates a bus line to bring the children and others to Sunday school and other meetings. Rev. Jacob R. Quiring is the pastor of the group.

Orland

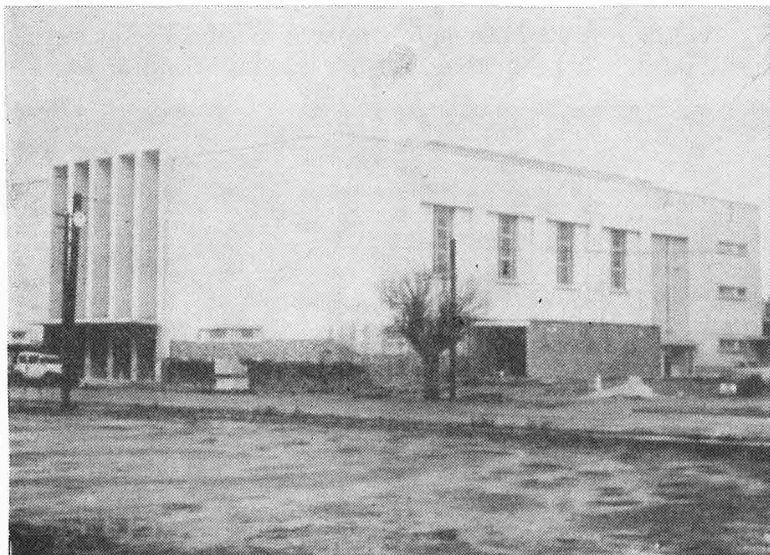
Real estate promoters in 1921 and 1922 were advertising land still farther north in California. The so-called Cope Ranch, a large complex of land owned by the Cope family,



Orland Mennonite Brethren Church

had been made available to land buyers. Reedley people were taken to see the land by Brother Schneider. Brother Frank Martens, Sr., bought a farm with a lovely home near the Sacramento River in this part of the state. Rev. H. F. Klassen, formerly from Minnesota, who was active in the field of evangelism in the Mennonite Brethren Church, also bought a place. Others followed these first brethren.

A church of 33 members was organized with Rev. H. F. Klassen as the first pastor in 1923. Later Rev. John Siemens, now of Dinuba, and Rev. David Letkeman, at present also in Dinuba, served as pastors of the group. The church has 12 Sunday school classes and 108 members. Three missionaries have gone to the foreign mission field from the church. The group conducts services in the County Jail and the County Hospital. The present pastor is Rev. Herman D. Wiebe.

Reedley

Reedley Mennonite Brethren Church

To many California was an unknown land, spoken of only from hearsay, and dreamed of as the land of sunshine and everlasting summer with golden oranges, lemons, and grapefruit. Few expected ever to see this so-called paradise on the West Coast. There were some, however, who were inspired by the words so often spoken, "Go west, young man, go west," and ventured out to go west, not knowing that this should become the home of thousands of our Mennonite Brethren members in a future not too far distant.

In Nebraska the Peter Harms family and a Neufeld family packed and left for the West in the early 1900's to settle near

the town of Reedley. At Inman, Kansas, the Dietrich Enns family got ready, came to California, and located in the Windsor community, near Reedley, in 1904. Many in the old and established communities in other states followed these early moves to California with keen interest. There were those who did not like California and soon returned to their former homes. Soon, however, some of these went back to California a second time. Some moved as many as three times before they could accept California as a permanent home. The fire for the move westward started to burn and is still going strong.

A group of 12 Mennonite Brethren members gathered in the Windsor school building on June 12, 1905, and organized



Air View of the Reedley Church Grounds

the first Mennonite Brethren Church in California. Brother D. T. Enns was appointed leader of this group by Elder Abraham Schellenberg. In 1907 Rev. Abram A. Buhler, who had served as leader of one of the newly organized churches in Canada and had now moved to California, was elected leader of the church.

The first Mennonite Brethren church building in Reedley was erected on the corner of L Street where the present church

building stands. This building was soon too small and in 1919 a new and larger church building was erected. Rev. D. C. Eitzen was the leader of the church at that time. The present building was started in 1949 at the time when Rev. J. B. Toews was the leader of the church.

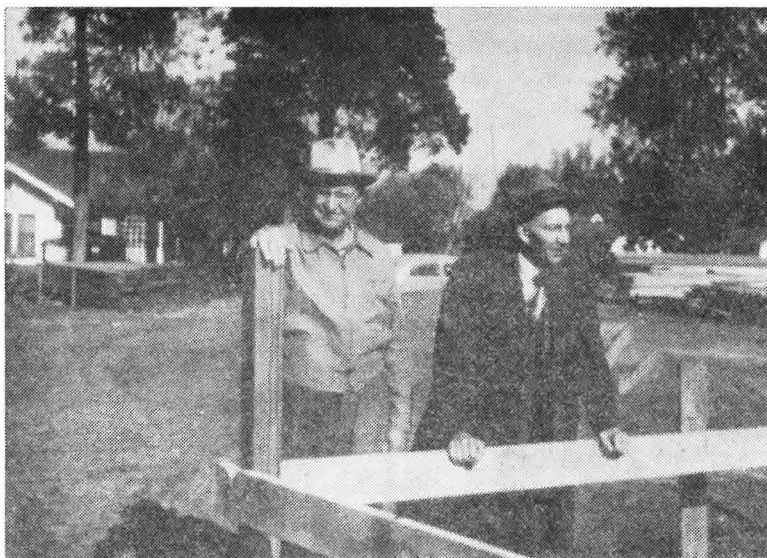
The Reedley Church has 70 Sunday school classes. It has charge of six extension stations. Twelve missionaries from the church are on the foreign mission field. The membership is 1345. Rev. H. R. Wiens is the present pastor.

The present church building is located on the corner of L and Thirteenth Streets. The street running east and west is South or Dinuba Avenue. The new homes on the south side of the street are the residences of members.



Beginnings of the New Reedley Church Building

More than three years and close to \$500,000 were given to building the new church edifice. Sam Knaak, a successful farmer and builder, used his courage and wisdom and the grace of God as Building Superintendent supervising the building of the new church. The labor required in erecting the building was largely donated by the members of the congregation.

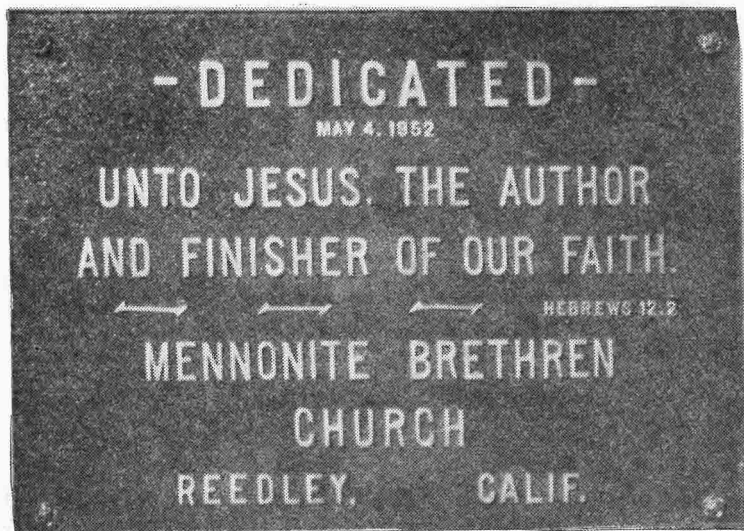


**Brother Sam Knaak and Rev. J. J. Gerbrandt Viewing
the Early Construction Progress**



Home for the Aged and Part of the Sunday School Building

The Home for the Aged, providing homes for our fathers and mothers in the later years of life is on the ground adjoining the Reedley Church. It is owned and operated by the Pacific District Conference under an arrangement in which the churches of the District share alike in maintaining the institution. Brother H. R. Martens of Reedley has been the chairman of the organization since it was founded.



Bronze Plate in the New Church Building

Mounted at the entrance of the new building is the bronze plate which displays the dedication of the building.

Rev. J. B. Toews was the leader of the Reedley Church during the construction of the new church building. He had earlier served a number of churches both in Canada and the United States. Rev. Toews is a member of the Foreign Mission Board. In 1952 he served as delegate to the World Mennonite Conference in Basel, Switzerland, and visited the Mennonite Brethren mission fields in Africa. At the present time he is the Deputation Secretary of the Foreign Mission Board.

Members of the Mennonite Brethren Churches in the Reedley and Dinuba areas own and maintain the Hartland Bible Camp, a beautiful camp site with dining hall, cabins for boys and for girls and cabins owned by individual members



Rev. J. B. Toews, Hillsboro, Kansas

of the churches and located about forty miles from Reedley in the high Sierras. The group operating the camp is organized as the Hartland Association.

The Immanuel Bible Academy located in Reedley is a joint project in which the Reedley and Dinuba and the Zion churches participate.

California and Irrigation

The bountiful water supply has helped make California what it is today. Before the irrigation projects, dry farming was the farm practice followed. Vast wheat fields covered the area of Reedley and surroundings. Mr. Reed, after whom Reedley is named, is said to have delivered as many as a million bushels of wheat. At present storage reservoirs constructed by building cement dams across rivers in the mountains at strategic places, provide a water supply for irrigation and for generating electric power. There is also a good underground water supply.

The Kings River, near Reedley, furnishes the water supply for Fresno, Sanger, Parlier, Reedley, Dinuba, Selma, and Kingsbury areas. Head gates are installed about fifteen miles



Irrigation of Vineyards in the Reedley-Dinuba Area

up the river and the water is then brought in large canals to the farm lands below enabling farmers to grow every kind of fruit. This has made California very wealthy.

California and National Parks

The United States government by Act of Congress has set aside large tracts of forest land in California. General Grant Park is located about 50 miles east of Reedley. The Sequoia National Park is about 60 miles east of Dinuba. The two parks are connected with a hard surface road at an elevation of 6000 feet. Centuries-old trees, the Sequoia Gigantea, are found in these parks. The Big Tree is 36 feet in diameter at the base and about 300 feet in height. It is estimated that it is 4000 years old. These trees are preserved by the government.

The lumber business, fed by the trees from the mountains, has flourished in this area. A lumber mill, furnishing employment to many, is located between Reedley and Dinuba.

Mt. Whitney, 14,495 feet high, the highest mountain in the United States, is found in Sequoia Park.



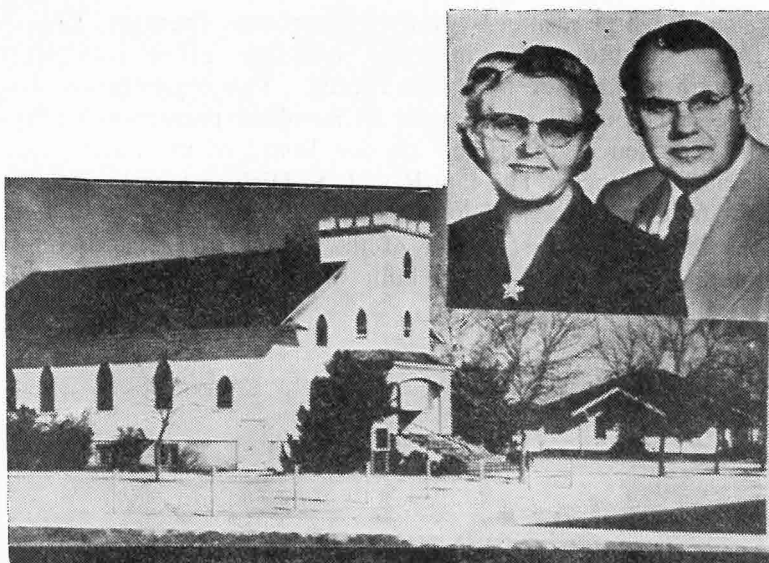
The Big Redwood Tree in General Grant Park

Rosedale

In the years 1907, 1908, and 1909 a spirit of moving stirred the Mennonite Brethren people. Some moved to the western parts of Kansas and Oklahoma. A number made the move as far west as California. A group from Kansas and Oklahoma settled in a new location known as Martensdale, about 10 miles north of Bakersfield. When later difficulties arose in this settlement, the people resettled in the Rosedale community.

Rosedale is located on Highway 178 connecting the Pacific Ocean and the high Sierra Mountains along the Kern River.

The Rosedale area is one of the best cotton and alfalfa growing sections. Water comes to this area by the way of the Central Valley Irrigation Project and the Shasta Dam in Northern California.



**Rosedale Mennonite Brethren Church, the Parsonage, and
Rev. and Mrs. P. N. Hiebert**

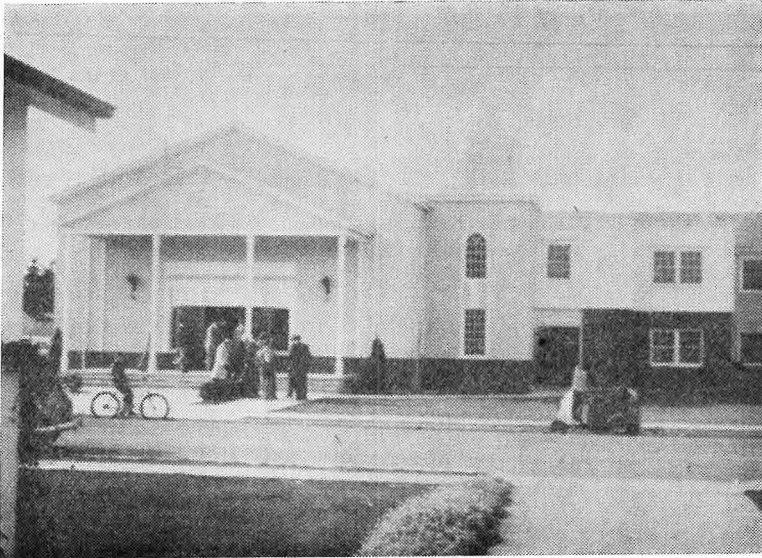
The Rosedale Mennonite Brethren Church was organized in 1909 with about 45 members. Rev. Jacob Kliewer was the first pastor of the church. At present eleven Sunday school classes are working in building God's kingdom. Two extension stations are maintained. The membership is 165. Rev. P. N. Hiebert is the pastor of the church.

San Jose

Many young men in the older communities were beginning to look for work elsewhere. In the early 30's some of the Reedley young people ventured out and stopped in the city of San Jose to work in the canneries. This type of work was only seasonal. Soon, however, there were those who remained for the entire year and finally some made San Jose their permanent home. The mild winters and cool summers were attractions hard to resist.

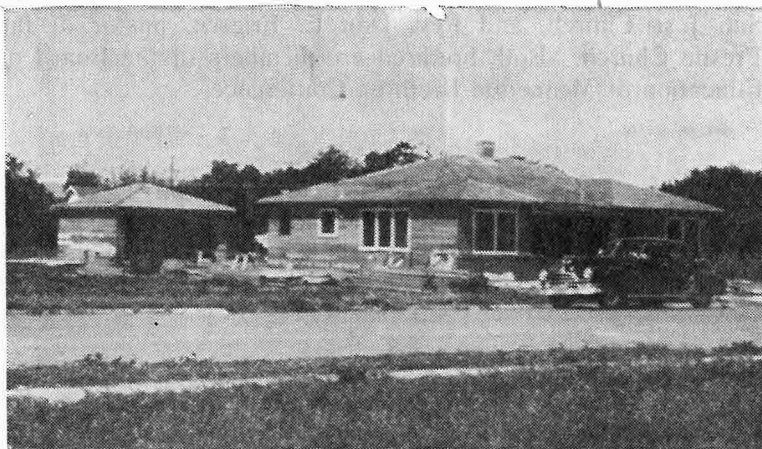
San Jose is on U. S. Highway 101 and can also be reached on U. S. Highway 99 via Pacheco Pass.

The first members of the Mennonite Brethren Church found substitute church homes until the group was large enough to organize their own church. This organization took place October 20, 1940, with 20 members present and under the direction of the Home Mission Board of the Pacific District Conference. The late Rev. J. S. Dick, a former missionary to China, assisted in the organization. Rev. D. J. Gerbrandt was the first pastor of the church. The new church building was planned and built when Rev. J. K. Warkentin was the pastor.



San Jose Mennonite Brethren Church

The church today has 18 Sunday school classes and one extension project. One missionary from the church is on the foreign field. The membership is 253. Rev. William Neufeld is the present pastor.



Parsonage of the San Jose Mennonite Brethren Church

The church building is located at 1195 Clark Street. The parsonage is on Clark Street in the Willow Glen District.



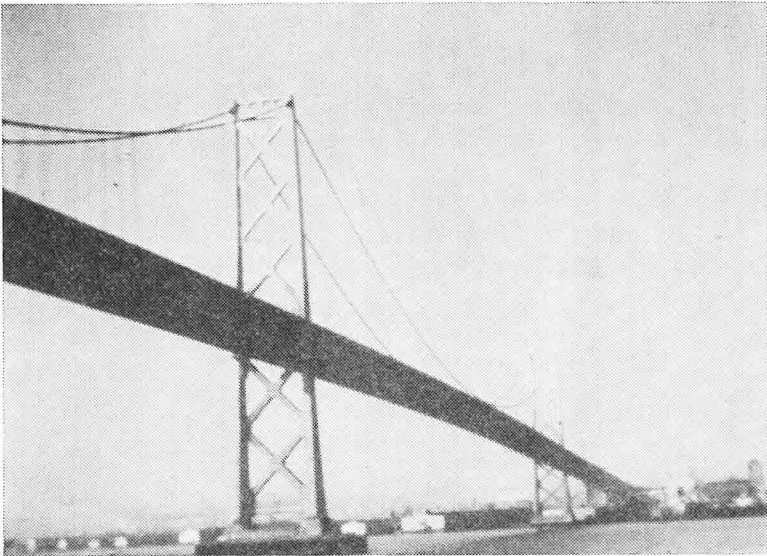
Rev. William Neufeld and Rev. Dan E. Friesen

Officiating at the dedication of the new church building in San Jose were the brethren William Neufeld, pastor of the

San Jose Church, and Rev. Dan E. Friesen, pastor of the Fresno Church. Both brethren are members of the Board of Education of Mennonite Brethren Conference.

Oakland-San Francisco Bay Bridge

The Oakland-San Francisco Bay Bridge crosses San Francisco Bay between Oakland and San Francisco. The span is



The Oakland-San Francisco Bay Bridge

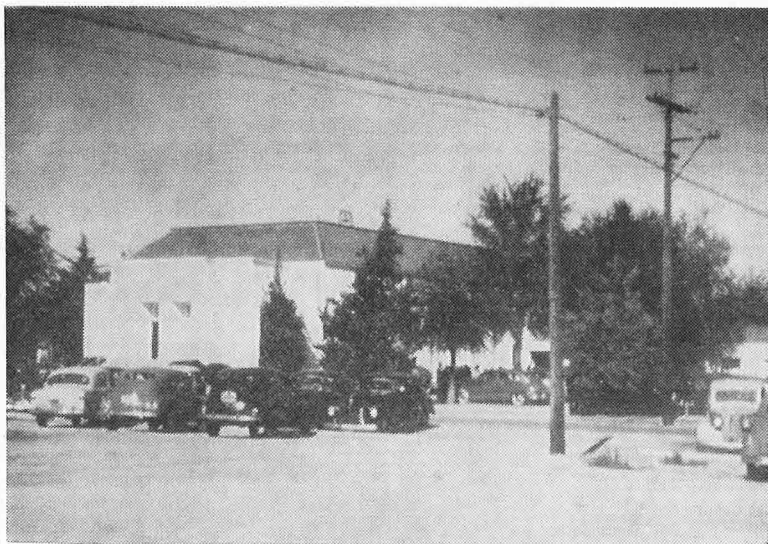
eight miles long and has five traffic lanes in each direction and a lower deck for trains and heavy trucks. The main structure is carried by four steel towers about 500 feet above the water. Huge cables are suspended from these towers and carry the structure first across the main channel from San Francisco to Yerba Buena Island and from thence to the Oakland side.

The Golden Gate Bridge is also a suspension bridge and spans the Golden Gate which is the inlet into San Francisco Bay from the Pacific Ocean. The Bay furnishes San Francisco one of the largest inland harbors in the world.

Shafter

The Shafter-Wasco district was the first new farming area settled after the Reedley community. Shafter is nine miles due west of Lerdo, which is located on U. S. Highway 99, the busiest main highway on the West Coast linking California, Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia.

At the time when the Shafter area was settled it was a raisin-producing region. This was a time when raisins were selling at a premium. Other fruits do well here also. At the present time most fruit-growing has been discontinued and



Shafter Mennonite Brethren Church

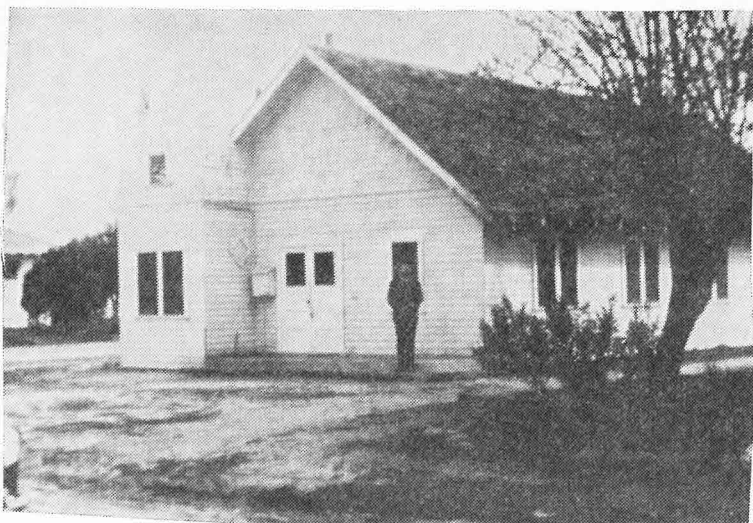
extensive potato and cotton farming have been substituted. Shafter is the largest long white potato growing region in the United States. Deep wells supply the water necessary for irrigation. As more land was brought under cultivation, more pumping was done. This caused the water level in the wells to drop, so that today most wells are deepened to get the precious water.

The Shafter Mennonite Brethren Church was organized under the leadership of Rev. P. P. Rempel, well known evangelist, with 27 members. Today the church has 523 members and a Sunday school of 33 classes. The church main-

tains the Park Lawn Mennonite Brethren Church and the Grace Mennonite Brethren Church. Three missionaries from the church are on a foreign field. Rev. Waldo Wiebe is the present pastor.

Winton

A number of brethren came to California from Canada and from Aberdeen, Idaho, in 1920 and settled in the Livingston area. This settlement did not prove satisfactory, however, so they moved to the Winton area, south of Denair and



Winton Mennonite Brethren Church

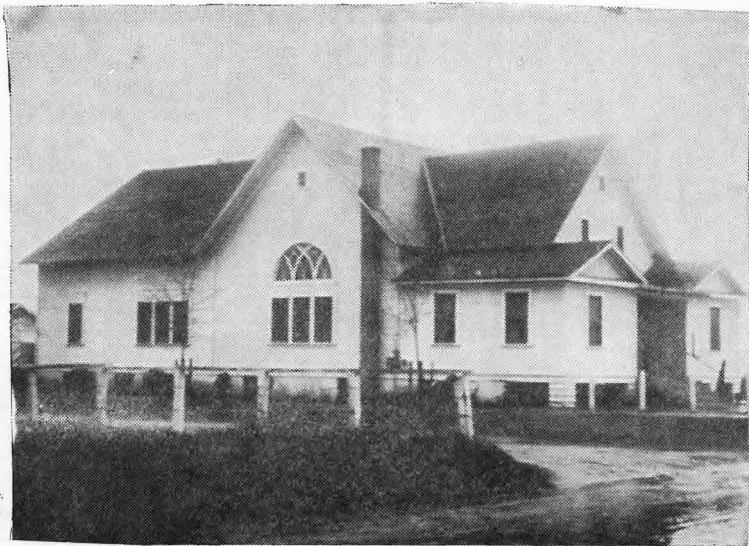
about four miles east of Atwater on Highway 99. The Holde-
man Mennonites have a large church in Winton.

In the summer of 1922 the Winton Mennonite Brethren Church was organized under the leadership of Rev. J. M. Enns, son of Rev. Johann Enns, formerly from Henderson, Nebraska, and later from Munich, North Dakota. The church has six Sunday school classes and is responsible for one extension station. The present membership is 46. Rev. Menno A. Schellenberg is pastor of the church.

Zion

The Zion Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Church is a rural church two miles south and three miles west of Dinuba and five miles south and one mile east of Reedley.

The Zion Church was organized when the late Rev. Kleinsasser with his family and the Hofer family, both families from South Dakota, settled in this part of California. There has always been a cordial feeling and a cooperative working relationship between the Zion Church and the Mennonite Breth-



Zion Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Church

ren churches of this area. The Zion Church is one of the cooperating churches in the Immanuel Bible Academy and in the Pacific Bible Institute.

The Zion Church is under the leadership of Rev. C. F. Plett. Members of the church own radio station KRDU, from which the Dinuba Mennonite Brethren Church broadcasts every Sunday and the Reedley Mennonite Brethren Church during the weekend and Sunday evening.

The growth of the church has made it necessary a number of times to enlarge the church building.

Oregon

Oregon belongs to the Pacific District Conference and has two Mennonite Brethren Churches.

Dallas

Two young men, Frank Friesen and David Nachtigal, in the early part of 1900 started from Henderson, Nebraska, and traveled West to see the world and while on the way to earn enough to supply their daily needs. They came as far west as Dallas, Oregon, where they found employment and stayed



Dallas Mennonite Brethren Church

for a time. They liked the country and their work and stayed long enough to fall in love with some young ladies in the Salt Creek District. They were married and established their homes here. At first they affiliated with the Baptist Church and later they united with the Mennonite Brethren Church.

Dallas is a thriving lumber-producing center and has attracted a number of lumber mills. Some of the brethren found employment in these mills.

In 1906 a Mennonite Brethren Church with 15 members was organized in Dallas. Rev. P. C. Hiebert was the first

pastor. The church at present has about 20 Sunday school classes. Two families of the church serve a station under the American Sunday School Union. Five missionaries from the church are on foreign mission fields. The present membership is 346. Rev. Walter L. Penner is the leader.

The original church building was located in the Salt Creek district, a few miles north and west of the city of Dallas. Here it served its members who at the time were farmers in this area. When the church building no longer provided sufficient room for the members, a new building was erected at the corner of Washington and Hayter Street. The new building has been enlarged so as to be able to accommodate the growing church.

West Salem

Salem, Oregon, is the second largest city in the Willamette Valley of Oregon. The Willamette River has its source on the western slopes of the Cascade Mountains and runs into the great Columbia River, which forms the boundary between the states Oregon and Washington. Salem is located on U. S. Highway 99E and 50 miles south of Portland and 15 miles east of Dallas. West Salem is a residential district on the west bank of the Willamette River.

For some time the Dallas Church maintained a mission in West Salem. In 1940 a church was organized with 27 members and Rev. A. A. Loewen as pastor. The church today is known as the Kingwood Bible Church. The name Kingwood refers to its location in the Kingwood District. It has 164 members according to the Pacific District Conference Yearbook of 1953. There are 14 Sunday school classes. Six foreign missionaries have come from this church. Rev. Frank Wiens, formerly the pastor of the Sawyer Mennonite Brethren Church in North Dakota, is the present pastor.

Washington

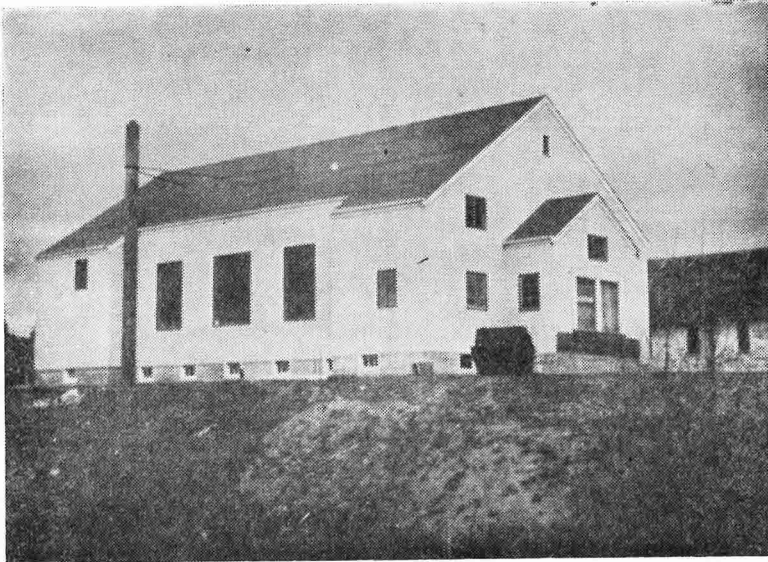
Blaine

Homeseekers in the Pacific Northwest were on the alert to find new homes for themselves and their children. A little group of settlers made their homes on the logged over land

south and west of Birch Bay, near the United States-Canada border. Others bought farms already built up in this area.

Blaine and Birch Bay are close to the ocean and just east of Vancouver Island. Blaine has a large fish cannery. Bellingham, a large city and center of industry, consisting especially of lumber mills, is located 23 miles to the southeast.

At the time when Rev. and Mrs. N. N. Hiebert had their home in Salem, Oregon, a call came to them asking that they



Blaine Mennonite Brethren Church

serve the little group of settlers in Washington. The Hieberts then moved to Washington and bought their own little farm.

The church was organized December 18, 1937, with 23 members and Rev. N. N. Hiebert as the first pastor. The first church building was built on the farm belonging to the Hieberts. In 1948 a new building was erected alongside the old one. The church at the present has 17 Sunday School classes and two extension stations. It has two missionaries on the foreign field. There are 182 members. Rev. D. P. Schultz is the present pastor.

Chapter 4

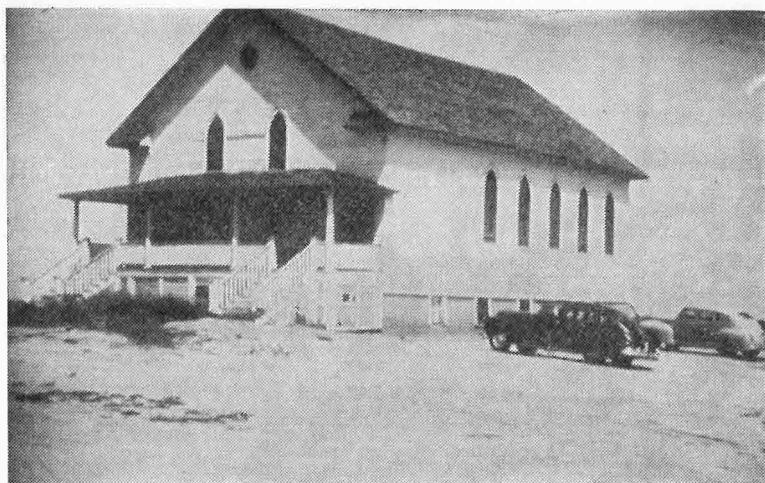
**THE MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCHES OF THE
SOUTHERN DISTRICT CONFERENCE**

Colorado

Colorado belongs to the Southern District of the Mennonite Brethren Conference. There is one Mennonite Brethren Church in the state.

Joes

Members from the Henderson Mennonite Brethren Church in Nebraska came to the Joes or Kirk community in Colorado,



Joes Mennonite Brethren Church

about 40 miles west of the Kansas-Colorado border, in the year 1887. These first settlers were about 50 miles from the nearest town. Colorado at this early date was frontier country with much wild life. Poisonous snakes were a menace to man and beast, so much so that some of the early settlers lost loved ones because of rattlesnake bites.

The Mennonite Brethren Church in this community was organized January 1, 1892. Brother Heinrich Bergthold was

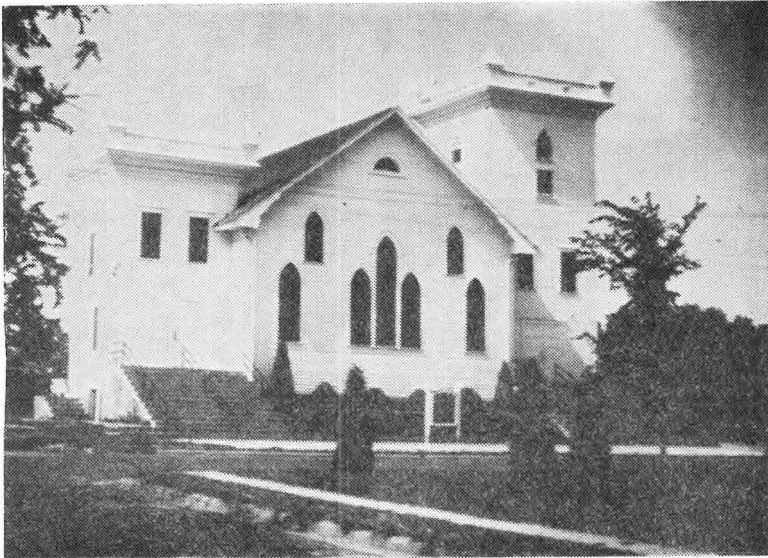
elected the first leader. In October of that year Rev. David Dick from Woodson County, Kansas, made his home in Colorado. He was then unanimously elected leader. A sod building to serve as the place for worship was erected November 24, 1892.

The Church today has nine Sunday school classes. One family is in the foreign mission field. There are 61 members. Rev. Eldo Ratzlaff is the leader of the group.

Kansas

Kansas belongs to the Southern District of the Mennonite Brethren Conference and has ten Mennonite Brethren Churches.

Buhler



Buhler Mennonite Brethren Church

Buhler is a little village located one-half of a mile north of the Little Arkansas River and 19 miles south and a little west of McPherson. Here a person enters any business establishment and is understood speaking the low German. Many older people have settled here after retirement.

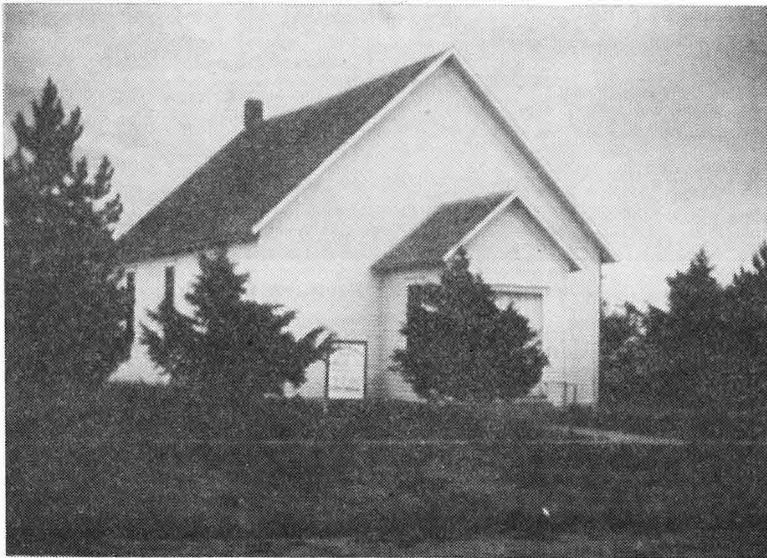
One of the immigrants on the steamship *Switzerland* that docked in Philadelphia in June of 1879 was the Elder Abraham Schellenberg. He and his family settled near Buhler. He was elected the first pastor of the Ebenezer Mennonite Brethren Church east of Buhler. There were at that time 26 members.

Elder Schellenberg played an important role in building the Church of Jesus Christ. He was the leader of the Conference many years, a personal worker, an evangelist, a counselor in home missions and foreign missions, and was respected by young and old, always willing to serve his Lord, the Church and the Conference.

The charter of the Mennonite Brethren Conference was taken out at Buhler. The foreign missions work was first organized here.

The Buhler Church at present has 28 Sunday school classes and two extension stations. One married couple from the church is serving on the foreign mission field. The membership of the church is 524. Rev. Jacob J. Toews is the present pastor.

Dorrance



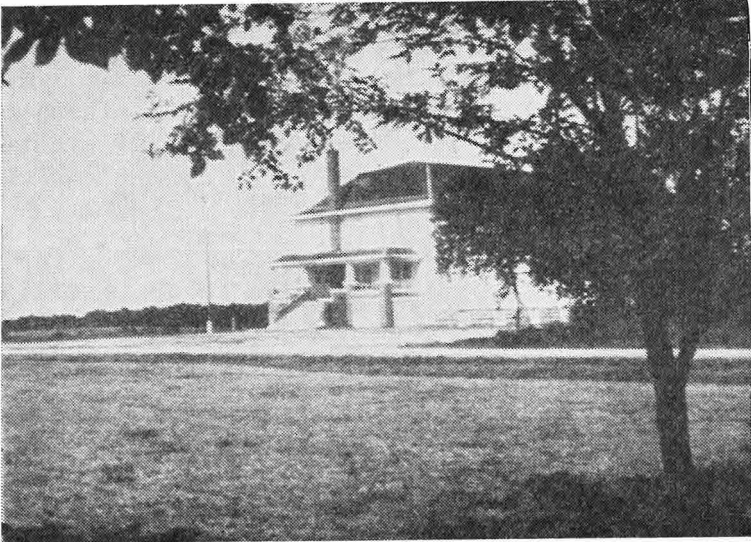
Dorrance Mennonite Brethren Church

The little western town of Dorrance is located on Highway 40 about 60 miles west of Salina and 42 miles north of Great Bend.

In 1912 a group of German-speaking Mennonite Brethren members settled in this area. They organized a church of 29 members under the leadership of Rev. Peter Wiens. The dry years and severe dust storms in the thirties caused a number of families to leave and resettle elsewhere.

Today the church has five Sunday school classes. One married couple serves as missionaries in South Texas. The membership is 49. Rev. Gerhard Warkentin is the pastor.

Ebenfeld



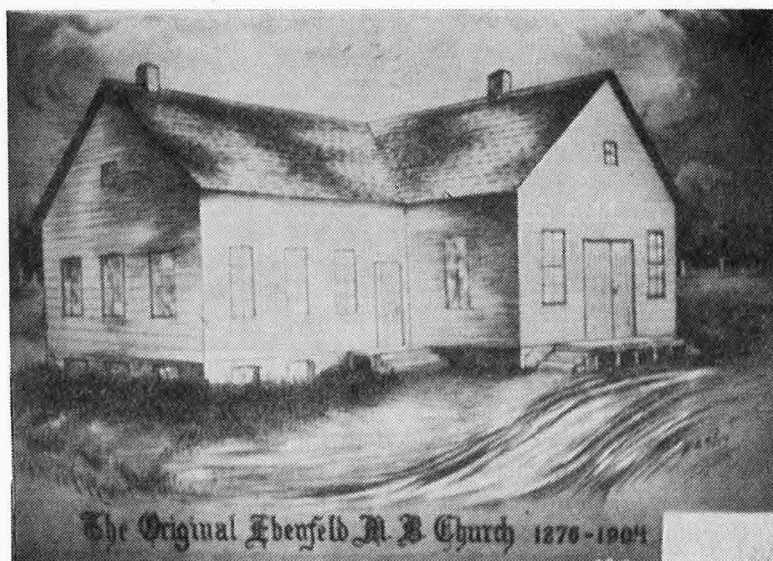
Ebenfeld Mennonite Brethren Church

The first Mennonites coming to Kansas found the country wild, there were no roads, and high grass covered the ground, and trees were found only along rivers and streams.

Ebenfeld, six miles southeast of Hillsboro, was chosen as a site for a settlement by a group of members of Mennonite Brethren churches. The name Ebenfeld refers to the level country in which the community is located. Except to the north and west, the farms are mostly free of deep ravines and

rivers. To the north is the Cottonwood River which goes on a rampage during heavy downpours, which are common in this area.

The Ebenfeld Mennonite Brethren Church was started in 1875 with about 25 members. Rev. Peter Eckert was the first leader. In a year during which new immigrants moved in and united with the church, the membership increased to over 125 members. The late Elder Johann Foth became the leader of the group soon after the church was organized and served in the position of leader many years. Other important brethren in



The Original Ebenfeld Mennonite Brethren Church

the church were Rev. J. K. Hiebert, Rev. G. W. Lohrenz and Rev. Christian Seibel.

The Ebenfeld Church at the present time has a Sunday school of 17 classes. The Steinreich Church has been an extension project for over 40 years. Three missionaries serve in the field of foreign missions. The church has 250 members. Rev. Allen Fast is the pastor of the church.

In 1951 the Ebenfeld Church observed its Seventy-Fifth Anniversary. The original building, erected in 1876, served the congregation until 1904. Since no photographs of the old

church building were available, it was reproduced by Prof. A. R. Ebel of Tabor College from descriptions of the outline and a pattern as given by members who had attended the services of the church.



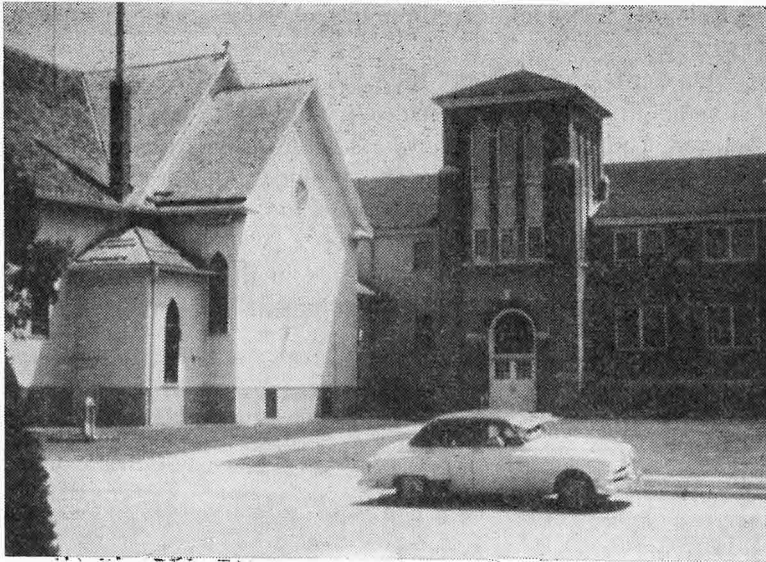
Ebenfeld Seventy-Fifth Anniversary Plate

A bronze plate was placed in the front of the present building on the occasion of the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary as a token of gratitude to God for the blessings received and the opportunities to serve in the course of 75 years of continuous history.

Ebenfeld has played an important part in the program in which Christ is building His church with the promise that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Many members have gone out from this church to places elsewhere to have a part in building the kingdom of God.

Hillsboro

Tabor College was located in the city of Hillsboro in 1908. Since that time the Mennonite Brethren population in Hillsboro has been growing steadily. When in 1915 the Publishing House was moved from McPherson to Hillsboro, it soon became evident that Hillsboro was to be a center of the Mennonite Brethren Conference activities. In 1953 the Con-



Hillsboro Mennonite Brethren Church

ference Office Building, with office space for the Mennonite Brethren Conference boards, was erected. Today many older and younger people live in Hillsboro because a number of Conference activities are located here. Tabor College attracts many to Hillsboro for the winter months when the school is in regular session.

The Hillsboro Mennonite Brethren Church was organized April 25, 1881, with 34 members present. Rev. John Harms was the first pastor.

The church today has 841 members. The membership includes a group of Conference workers. The Sunday school program is composed of 36 classes. The church has six extension stations. Six missionaries from the church are active in foreign missions. Rev. Waldo Hiebert, son of Rev. and Mrs. N. N. Hiebert, is the pastor of the church.

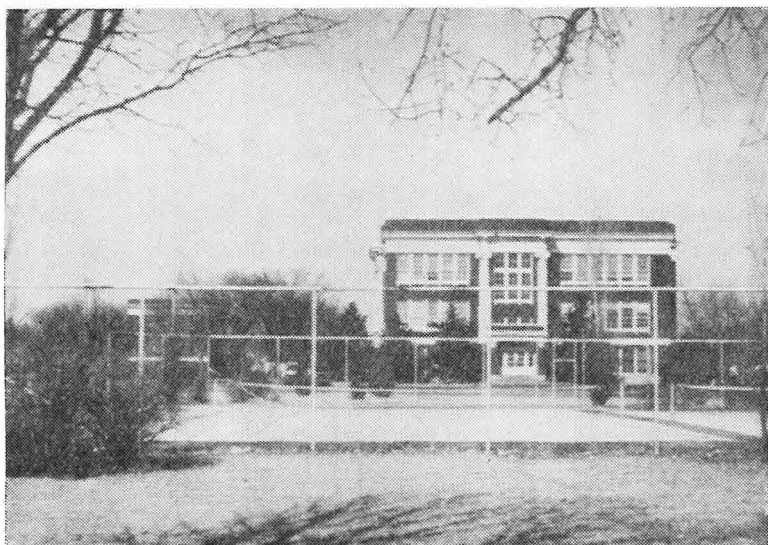
Tabor College

The organization of the Tabor College Corporation was completed in the spring of 1908. This was the response to a long-felt need on part of the Mennonite Brethren churches and

the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren churches for a college of their own.

On September 5, 1908, the school opened its doors to students the first time in the church building of the Mennonite Brethren Church. Three teachers were in charge of the instruction and administration. Thirty-nine students enrolled this first day. H. L. Buller from Henderson, Nebraska, was the first to enroll as a full-time student.

Ten years the school was housed in the first Tabor College building. The building and equipment had grown to have



Tabor College as seen from Highway 50N

a valuation of about \$24,000. Practically all of these material values were destroyed in a fire the morning of April 30, 1918.

Immediately after the fire, a Building Committee and a Finance Committee were appointed by the Board of the Corporation and the campaign for a new and more adequate \$100,000 building for Tabor College was started. On September 12, 1920, the new building was dedicated.

From the beginning until the close of the school year 1933-34, Tabor College was owned and controlled by the Tabor College Corporation. In 1933 the Corporation offered the school to the Mennonite Brethren Conference. The offer was

studied and discussed by the delegates in convention at Hillsboro in October, 1933, and then referred to the 116 churches of the Conference giving the churches the opportunity to express themselves as favoring or opposing the acceptance of the school. When the returns were counted, a two-thirds majority of the votes cast was in favor of accepting the offer of the Corporation. Tabor College thus became a Conference school. During the school year 1934-35 the school was closed and reorganized and reopened in the fall of 1935. The school operated under the charter of the Conference until 1952 when the college was again incorporated under its own charter.

The objectives of Tabor College are (1) to impart knowledge of Christianity and to encourage its application in daily living, (2) to instruct students in the teachings and practices of the Mennonite Brethren and Krimmer Mennonite Brethren churches and to encourage students to serve the Church, (3) to create a desire to search for truth, (4) to develop critical thinking in the basic areas of human knowledge, (5) to stimulate students to understand and assume the role of Christian citizens in a democratic society, (6) to help students discover and develop themselves, (7) to learn to express personal and social experiences in ways consistent with Christian principles, and (8) to develop competence in social, physical, and scientific skills.

Tabor College was built upon the foundation Jesus Christ and upon this foundation it stands.

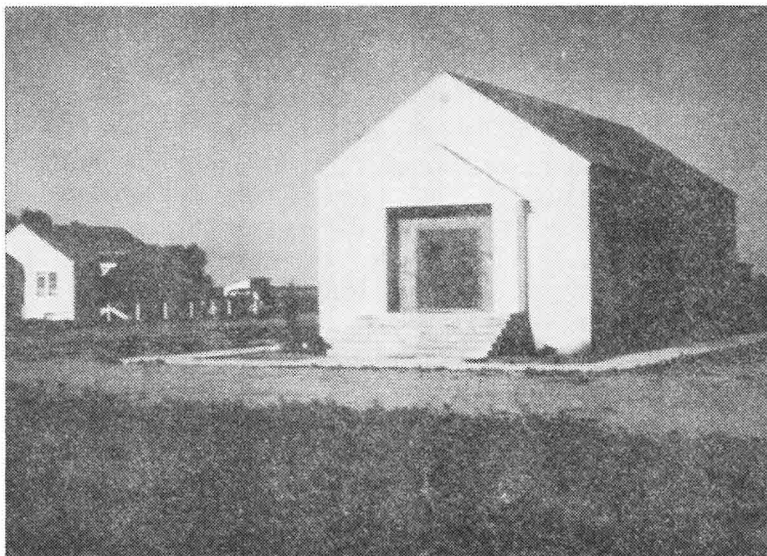
Ingalls

The West attracted more and more people to the rich farm land of the open prairies. Here was a good soil for wheat farming. Young people and older ones came to settle with their families. They went as far west as the Colorado border.

A church was organized in the Syracuse area. This was abandoned later. When the Board of Trustees two years ago investigated the location only a lonely grave was discovered on the former church grounds. The property, however, still belongs to the Mennonite Brethren Conference.

The records of the early history of the Ingalls Mennonite Brethren Church are incomplete. They do show, however, that on August 20, 1922, a group of 44 people attended the first

Sunday school in that community. On October 17, 1922, the group decided to purchase a church building which was to be known as the Ingalls Mennonite Brethren Church. Brother Henry Gaede was the leader of this group. The minutes of the meetings at Ingalls speak only of Sunday school elections until June, 1925. A record of a church meeting with Henry Gaede presiding was made under the date of June, 1925. Some



Ingalls Mennonite Brethren Church

of the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren members, who formerly had a meeting place northeast of Garden City, have been worshipping with the Mennonite Brethren group at Ingalls.

The church at Ingalls today has seven Sunday school classes, Rev. J. W. Fast is the pastor.

Lehigh

Lehigh is a little town on Highway 50N seven miles west of Hillsboro. The settlers of Lehigh laid out the streets in a northwest to southeast direction parallel to the tracks of the Santa Fe Railroad. This had led many, including the writer, to think of Lehigh as not straight with the world, not due north and south and east and west. Later thought, however, led the

writer at least to accept this arrangement as practical, in fact, in larger cities the streets run in any direction and even in circles.

The Lehigh Mennonite Brethren Church was organized in 1884 under the leadership of Rev. David Dick, one of the leaders in the early history of the Mennonite Brethren Church in America. The record does not show the number of persons present at the time of the organization.



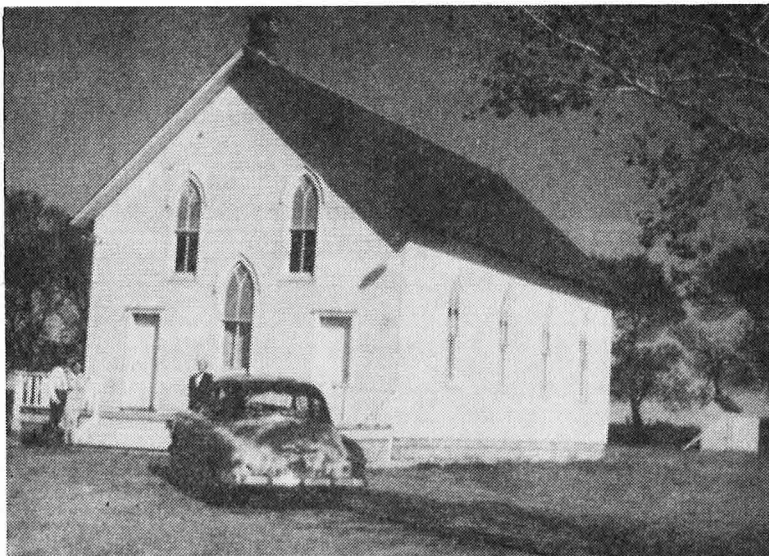
Lehigh Mennonite Brethren Church

Today the church has six Sunday school classes. One missionary from the church is on the foreign mission field. The membership is 52. Dr. P. R. Lange is the pastor.

Lehigh and other churches with a smaller membership have a very essential part to play in building for God.

Steinreich

The Steinreich Church, formerly was a mission station of the Ebenfeld Church. This is a rural church located ten miles east of the Ebenfeld Church and about ten miles south of Marion, just one mile west of Highway 77, which goes through Lincoln, Nebraska, to the north and Oklahoma City to the south.



Steinreich Mennonite Brethren Church

It was impossible to obtain the information needed for a full and most recent report on the church. The Yearbook of the Southern District Conference of 1953, however, lists it as having a membership of 48 and Rev. C. E. Fast as the pastor. Ministerial students from Tabor College have served the Steinreich Church at various times.

Tampa

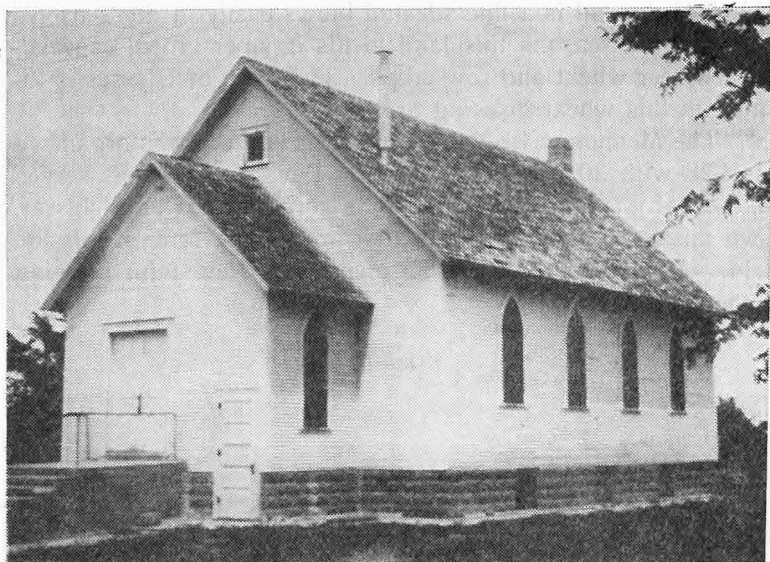
The Tampa Mennonite Brethren Church is located in the town of Tampa about 19 miles northeast of Hillsboro. Highway 15 brings the traveler within five miles of the town.

Records showing the time of organization, the number of persons present, and the name of the first pastor seem to be lacking. The church, however, has been active many years.

The church at present has 54 members. Rev. Louis Goertz is the pastor.

Ulysses

The vast prairies in the western part of Kansas attracted the wheat farmers. The drawback in farming this area is the



Tampa Mennonite Brethren Church

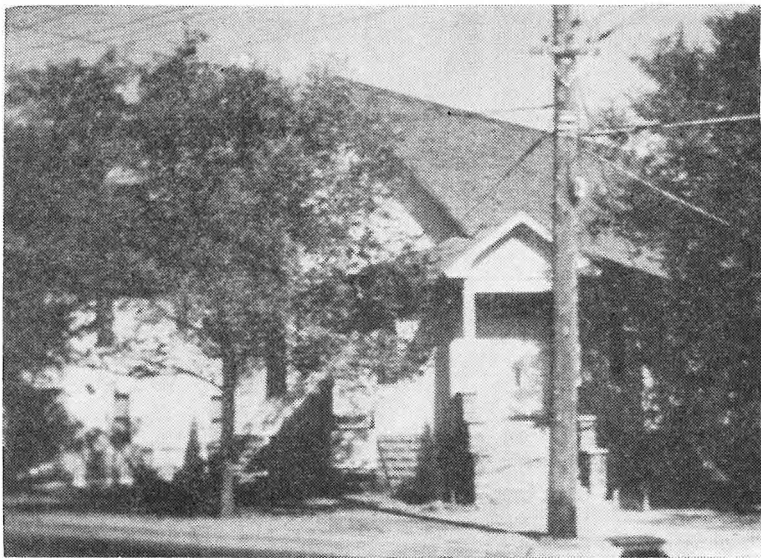


Ulysses Mennonite Brethren Church

fact that the soil is a fine silt and blows easily in dry seasons. In favorable seasons this land yields bumper crops, especially in winter wheat and row crops. The town of Ulysses is located in this wheat growing area.

The Mennonite Brethren Church at Ulysses was organized in 1928 with 30 members present. Rev. Isaac Harms served as the first pastor. The church has six Sunday school classes. Two missionaries from the church are on the foreign mission field. At present there are 55 members. Rev. John Flaming is the pastor.

Wichita



Wichita First Mennonite Brethren Church

Wichita is one of the fastest growing cities in Kansas. It is located on Highway 81 and has the Santa Fe and Rock Island Railroads making connections with all parts of the United States. The manufacture of private and government airplanes is one of the most important industries of the city. When the airplane factories first came to Wichita, they were far out to the southeast. Today the city has grown around them. Wichita is a fine place to do business and is also an excellent place in which to earn a living.

The members of the Mennonite Brethren faith organized themselves into a church in 1942 with 19 members present. Rev. Estil Schale was the first pastor.

Today eight Sunday school classes are at work. The church has one extension station. The membership is 70. Rev. Orlando Harms was the last pastor. When he became the Executive Manager and Editor of the Mennonite Brethren publications and moved to Hillsboro, Brother J. J. Klassen took charge of the church.

The church building and the parsonage are located at 1702 West Second Street.

Oklahoma

Oklahoma belongs to the Southern District of the Mennonite Brethren Conference and has 10 Mennonite Brethren Churches.

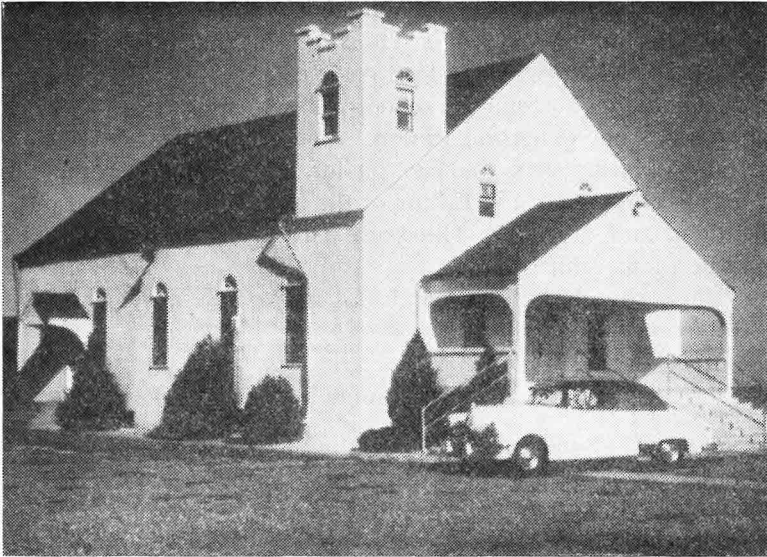
During the first 18 years of the Mennonite Brethren Church in America its activities were limited to the states of Kansas, Nebraska, Minnesota, South Dakota, North Dakota, and the province of Manitoba in Canada. The growth during this period was a natural growth in which the children of the church families were added to the church membership upon having experienced a conversion and baptism. Some growth took place by the coming of later immigrants of the Mennonite Brethren faith from the old country as single families. Very few from the outside were added to the church.

New opportunities for expansion came when Oklahoma was opened for settlement in 1893. This new territory was to become the home for many younger couples and for parents with children seeking greater opportunities.

Balko

With the need for new farms for the younger generation settlers moved west and built homes as far as Hamilton County in Kansas and Beaver County in the Panhandle of Oklahoma. In some cases parents left their former homes with their children in the hope of greater opportunities on the plains in the West.

Balko, located about ten miles north of the Texas border and between Boyd on Highway 83 to the west and Beaver to



Balko Mennonite Brethren Church

the east, provided one such new location. This is a fine level country well adapted to grain-farming. A settlement of Mennonite Brethren people was formed in this section in the early 1900's.

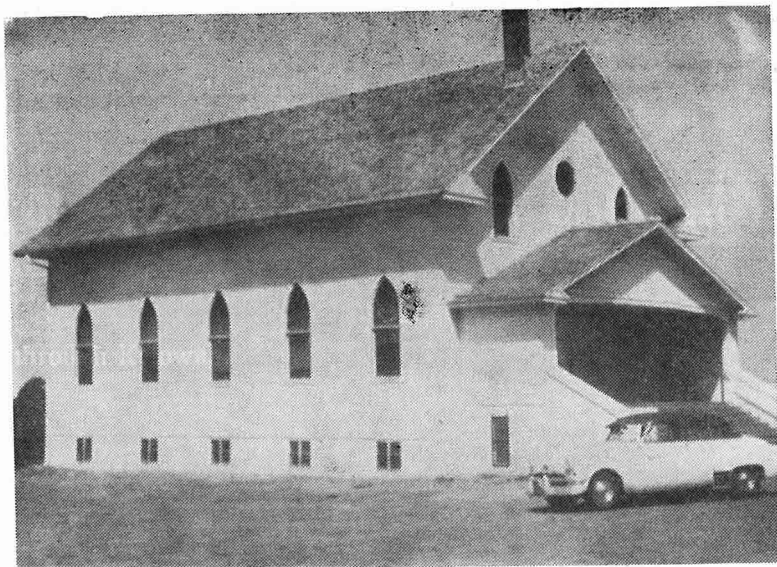
The Balko Church was organized in 1906 with nine members present. Rev. Sam Hodel, now living in British Columbia, was the first pastor.

The church at present has ten Sunday school classes and a membership of 141. Brother D. H. Penner is the leader of the group.

Bessie

A new settlement along the Washita River in Oklahoma was growing rapidly. Newcomers began to settle in the Bessie community, located on Highway 183, ten miles south of Clinton. Farms along the west banks of the Washita River as far south and west as Cordell and west of Bessie are owned by members of the Bessie Church.

In 1905 the Bessie Mennonite Brethren Church was organized with 35 members. Rev. A. B. P. Schmidt was the leader of the group.



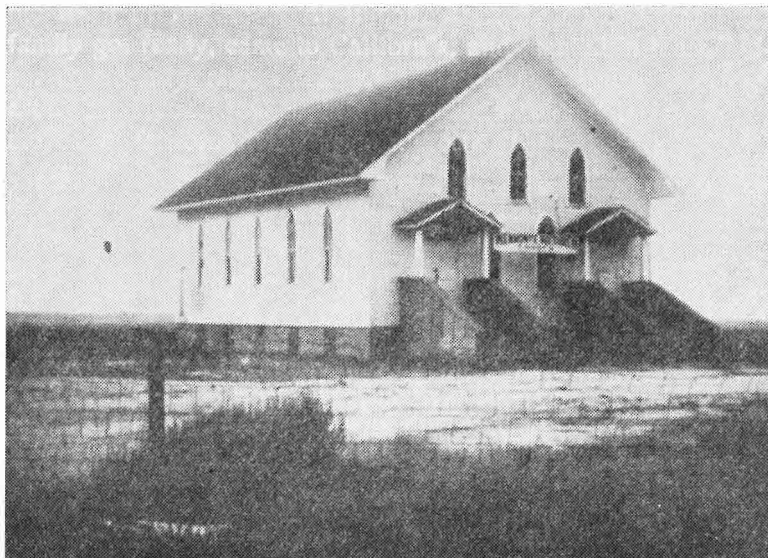
Bessie Mennonite Brethren Church

Today the church has 14 Sunday school classes. Two missionaries from the church are on the foreign mission field. The membership is 152. Rev. Elmo Warkentin is the pastor.

The Bessie Church building is located four miles west of Bessie and the parsonage is at 620 Caddo Street in Cordell.

Collinsville

Young people in many communities had a difficult time finding suitable farms close to the old home and began to look to new places in which to earn a livelihood. A considerable shifting of people from one community to the next was started. A number of members from the Mennonite Brethren Church in Henderson, Nebraska, bought farms in the Collinsville area in eastern Oklahoma, about 100 miles east of Enid and 22 miles northeast of Tulsa. The early settlers here thought of wheat-growing as their vocation. In the course of years, however, they discovered that mixed farming and dairying was more profitable. In this area there are many shallow oil wells, wells operated without the high towers. At one time there were also valuable ores mined. These, however, had already been abandoned when the Mennonite settlers came.



Collinsville Mennonite Brethren Church

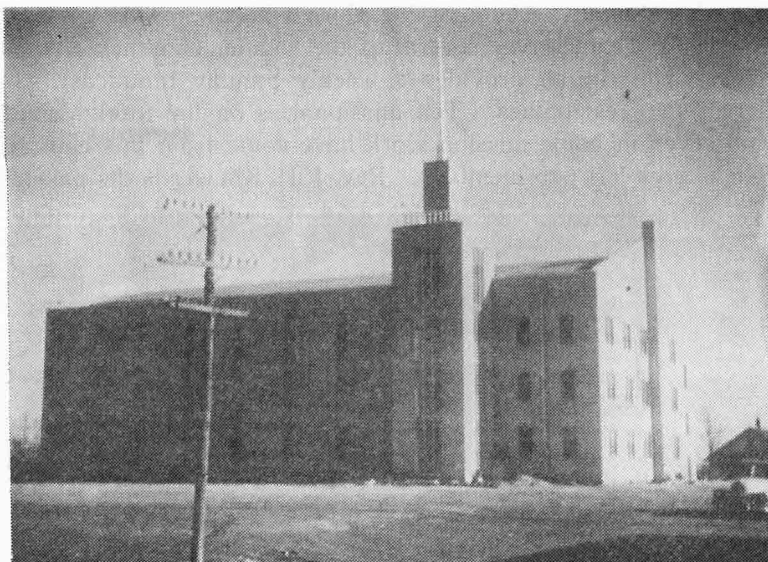
In 1913 the Mennonite Brethren Church was organized in this community with 12 members. The first pastor was Rev. B. C. Wedel.

At the present time the church has a membership of 76. There are 12 Sunday school classes. Rev. Leonard J. Vogt is the pastor.

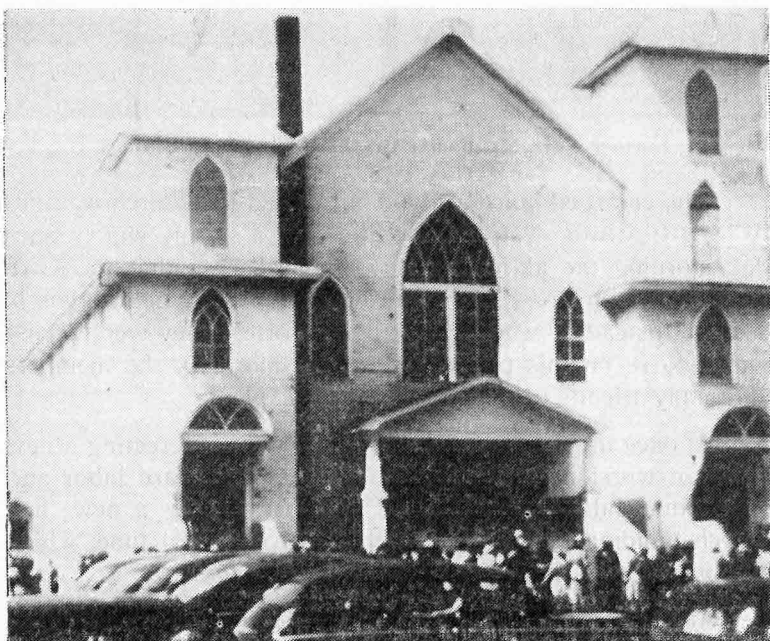
Corn

Mennonites found a desirable farming district in the fertile valley of the Washita River in Washita County. Here the little village of Corn located 14 miles south of Weatherford became the center of the settlement. At Weatherford is the nearest railroad for Corn. The village started with a store and a post office and later it grew to be a small town. Highway 66, the so-called Main Street of the United States is the north boundary of the settlement and Highway 41 running through Cordell is the southern boundary.

The Mennonite Brethren Church at Corn was organized in 1893 with 16 families. Rev. Abraham Richert was the first leader. At one time this was the largest church in the Conference. It is today one of the larger churches.

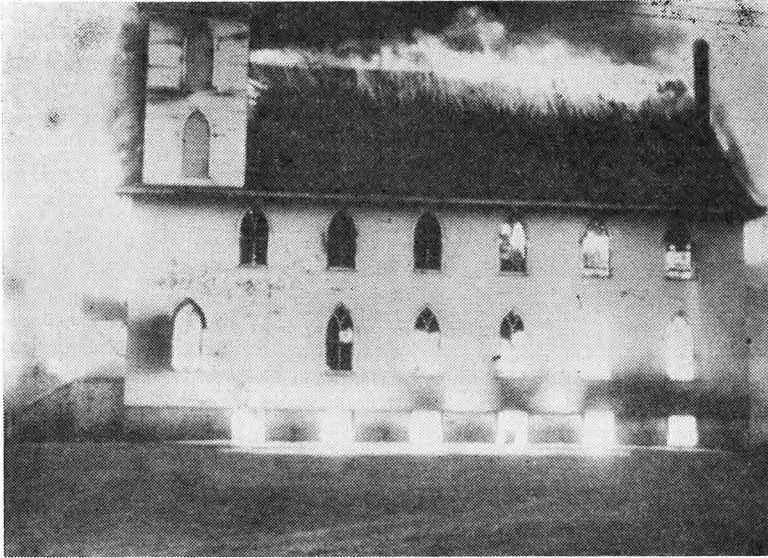


Corn Mennonite Brethren Church



Former Corn Mennonite Brethren Church

The Sunday school of the Corn Church has 41 classes. A Gospel Team serves several of the smaller churches of that area. The church provides a weekly Sunday broadcast. It serves two rest homes. Ten missionaries on the foreign field and seven in home mission work have come from this church. The church has 625 members. Rev. J. P. Kliever is the pastor.

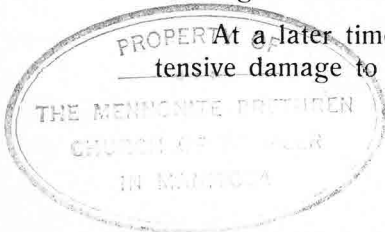


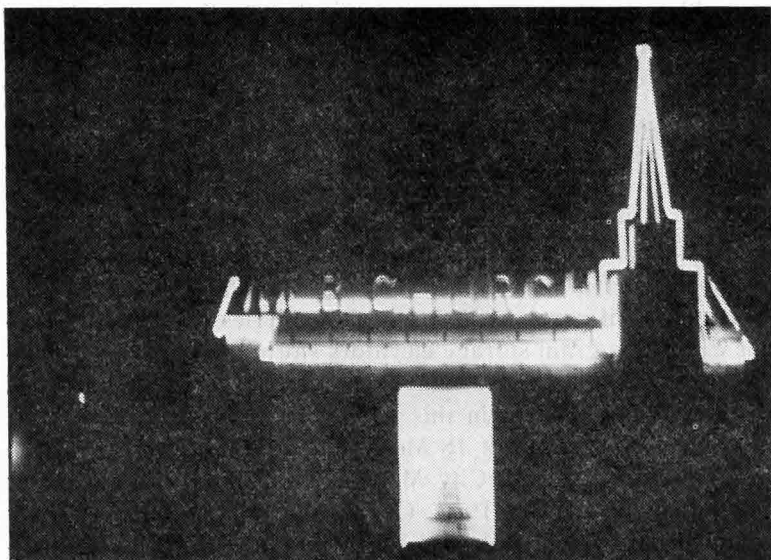
Former Corn Mennonite Brethren Church in Flames

The enlarged house of worship served the church well until in 1949 it was destroyed by fire. On a stormy wintry Sunday morning the alarm was given announcing that the Corn Church was on fire. Within an hour the fine structure was in ashes. Instead of worshipping in comfort as they were accustomed to it, on this particular Sunday morning, the members and many friends of the church stood helpless.

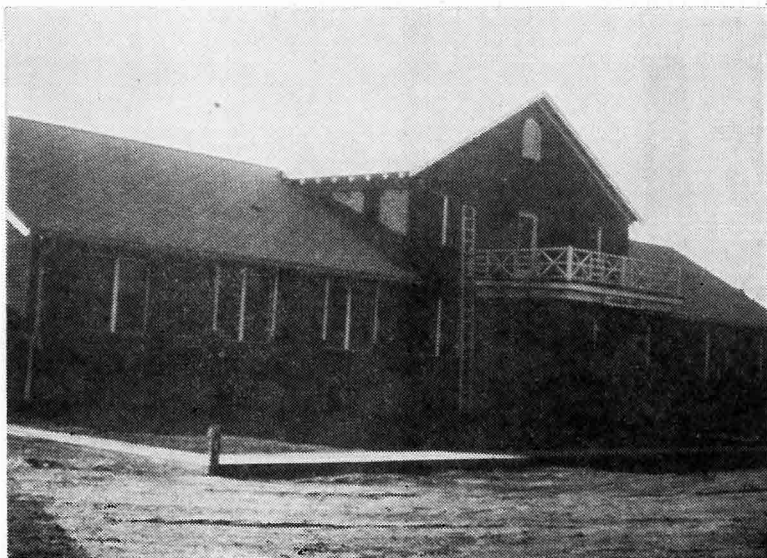
At once the work of clearing the debris and erecting a new house of worship was started. Many days of hard labor and much financial sacrifice by the members made a new fine church building possible in a comparatively short time, which building is now the home of the congregation.

At a later time a tornado hit the community and did extensive damage to the latest structure.





Road Sign of the Corn Mennonite Brethren Church



Corn Home for the Aged

The Old People's Home is maintained by the church on grounds near the church building. At the time of the tornado

the older people were gathered together for prayer and were wonderfully delivered from all harm.

Enid City

The city of Enid dates back to the time when the Cherokee Strip, a strip of land the government had purchased from the Indians in what is now Oklahoma, was opened to settlers. Homesteads of 160 acres could be obtained for a nominal sum of money and in no case exceeding two dollars an acre. Enid became an oil center with large oil refineries and a grain center with large grain storage elevators storing thousands of bushels of wheat annually. Many Mennonite young people found profitable employment in this city.

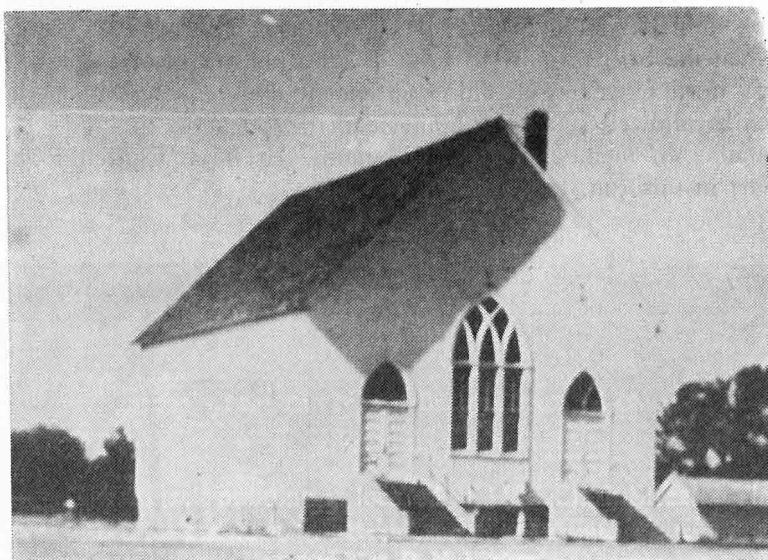
In 1924 a group of 18 Mennonite Brethren members were organized as the Enid City Mennonite Brethren Church under the leadership of Rev. P. C. Grunau, at present the Treasurer of the Board of Trustees of the Mennonite Brethren Conference.

The church today has 15 Sunday school classes. It has 175 members. Rev. C. E. Fast is the pastor.



Enid Mennonite Brethren Church

Enid North



North Enid Mennonite Brethren Church

In 1897 a group of members of the Henderson Mennonite Brethren Church in Nebraska established themselves near Kremlin and about eight miles north of the city of Enid on some of the finest wheat-growing land of the South. Rev. Peter Regier, the first pastor of the Henderson Church in Nebraska, was among the early settlers in this area. He moved here to find greater opportunities for himself and his large family.

Rev. Peter Regier was the leader in establishing the Mennonite Brethren Church here. Thirty members were present at the organization meeting.

There are 20 Sunday school classes at present. Two workers are engaged in extension work. The membership is 213. Rev. Robert C. Seibel is the pastor.

The church, known as the North Enid Mennonite Brethren Church, is located four miles north of Enid near what was formerly known as North Enid. The parsonage of the church is in the city of Enid at 425 West Mulberry Street.

The Mennonite Brethren Churches
Fairview North

Twelve o'clock noon on September 16, 1893, was an eventful moment in the history of Oklahoma. This was the hour when the Strip, a narrow tract of land just south of the Kansas border, was opened for settlement under an arrangement which allowed settlers a homestead of 160 acres of land. A number of members of the Mennonite Brethren Church took part in this run.



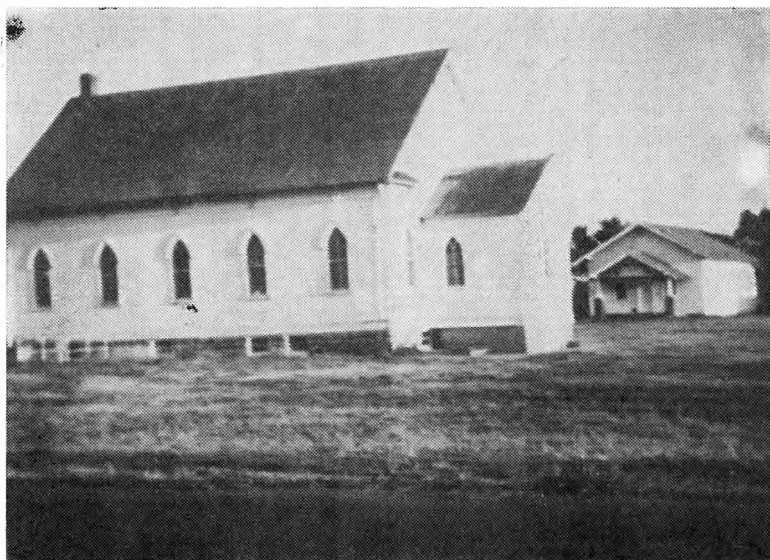
North Fairview Mennonite Brethren Church

Brother Carl Wichert, later of the North Fairview Church, relates how the brethren Martin Just, Henry Bartel, John and Will Hein, and Frederick and Carl Wichert from the Ebenfeld community were together in Caldwell, Kansas, about one mile from the border waiting to register and to make the run. In one week there had gathered in this little town about 50,000 people. The place had only one water well, so the bucket went up and down the well all day long supplying water for the people and horses. At twelve o'clock noon on September 16, the shots were fired along the border and the run was on.

The group, of which Brother Wichert was one, traveled all day and when night came found themselves empty-handed. They had been unable to stake a claim which was to enable them to file for a homestead. They then returned to Ebenfeld. In November of the same year, however, they started out again. Brother Wichert this time homesteaded land northwest of Fairview. He moved on to this place in April of 1894. Their first home was three feet wide and ten feet long. This furnished shelter until they were able to build a dugout 14 by 20 feet. Thus in the midst of hardships and trials the brethren made a start in this new world.

The Nord Hoffnungsfeld (North Field of Hope) Church was organized in 1895 with 98 members. Rev. Jacob Kliewer was the first pastor.

The membership in 1948 was 123. In 1949 the church voted to build a new church building in the city of Fairview. Having begun building, the church united with the South Fairview Church and thus formed the Fairview City Church.

Fairview South

South Fairview Mennonite Brethren Church

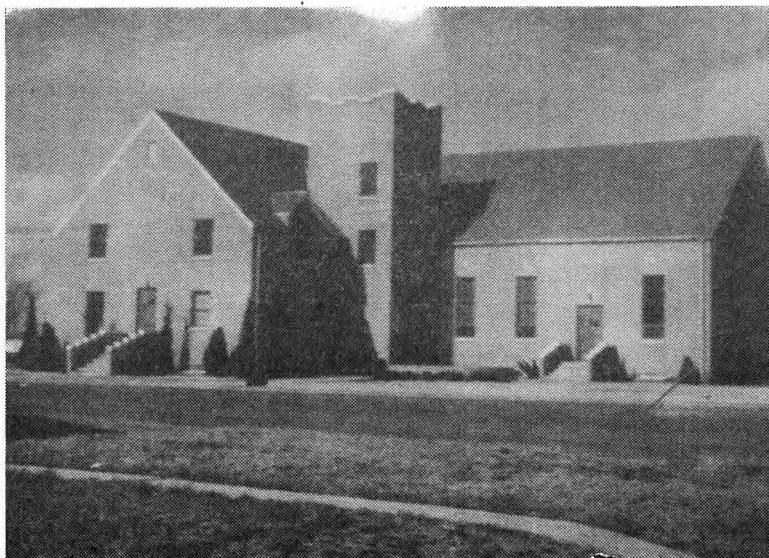
The south border of the Cherokee Strip, opened, at the time of the run in 1893 was where Hitchcock is located. While many came into this area from the north, there were some entered from the south. A group of brethren that came in this way settled in the neighborhood of Isabella and west.

A Mennonite Brethren Church of 69 members was organized here in 1895 as the Süd Hoffnungsfeld (South Field of Hope) Church. Rev. William Hergert was the first leader of this group. In later years the old sod building which served as the first meeting house was replaced by a larger and more modern structure.

The church in 1951 had 16 Sunday school classes. Three of its members are active as missionaries on the foreign mission field. The membership at that time was 162. Rev. J. J. Karber was the pastor

When the church consolidated with the North Fairview Church in 1951, the old building was dismantled and the lumber used in the building of the parsonage on the church grounds for the new Fairview City Church.

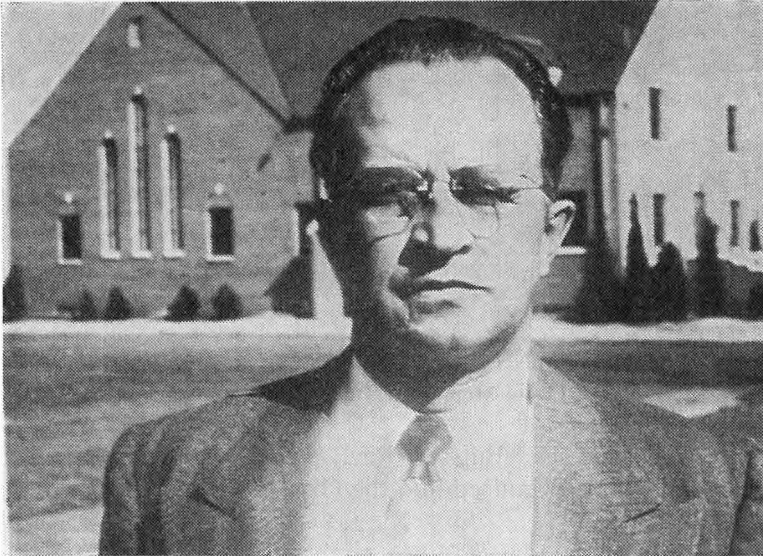
Fairview City



Fairview Mennonite Brethren Church

As more and more of the members of the Mennonite Brethren Churches retired to nearby towns, the need for churches in towns became more urgent. In the United States comparatively few rural churches remain.

Fairview had become the home of a number of retired families. When the North Fairview congregation decided to improve its church building, they agreed to build a new house of worship in the city of Fairview. The grounds in the country



Rev. D. J. Wiens, Fairview, Oklahoma

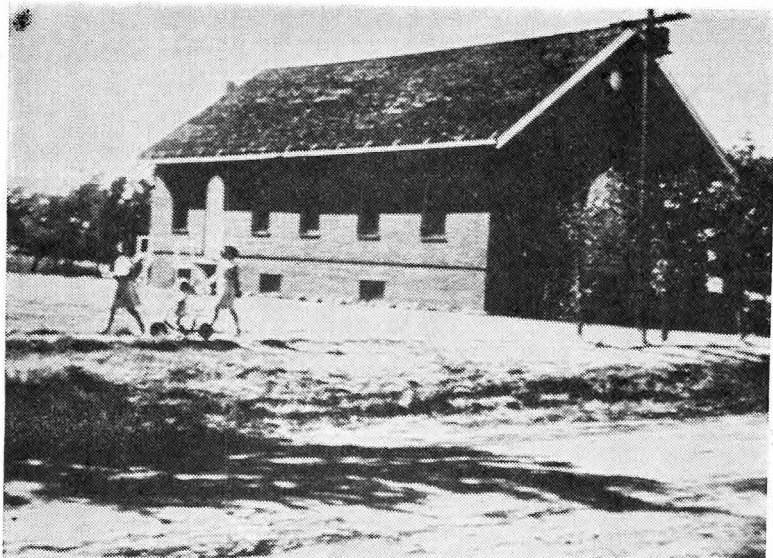
were exchanged for a city property and building operations started in 1949. In 1951 the two churches, the North Fairview Church and the South Fairview Church, united to form the City Church.

The church today has a membership of 415. It has 22 Sunday school classes. Four members are missionaries on the foreign field. Rev. D. J. Wiens is the pastor.

Okeene

Okeene is a prosperous community located about 8 miles south of Isabella and eight miles west of the Cimarron River. A group of homeseekers found suitable land in this area and

established their homes here after the opening of the Cherokee Strip.



Okeene Mennonite Brethren Church

Under the leadership of Rev. Henry Rush 12 families joined and were organized into the Okeene Mennonite Brethren Church.

The church today has 91 members. The Sunday school consists of six classes. Rev. E. C. Ollenburger is the pastor.

Post Oak Mission

The years from 1890 to 1900 were years of much mission activity in the Mennonite Brethren Conference. There was an interest in beginning a mission work in Africa. Rev. Peter H. Wedel, a worker on fire for God and effective in building the Church of Jesus Christ, had prepared himself in a special way for Christian service while attending the Baptist Theological Seminary at Rochester, New York. He had successfully served as evangelist in the churches a number of years and was looked upon as one who was to go as a missionary of the Conference to the Cameroon in Africa. When approached by a friend who sought to persuade this enthusiastic Christian worker not to

go to Africa but rather stay in America and do some work in Russia since he was so much needed in both places in preaching the gospel, he replied saying, that if he should be one stone in the foundation of foreign missions, he was willing to die for this cause in Africa. It was a blow to the high hopes held by the Conference when in 1895, Rev. Wedel left for Africa under a German Baptist Missionary Society. After a brief period of service in Africa, Rev. Wedel contracted a tropical illness, which forced him to discontinue his work and return to America. On ship on the Atlantic, however, he died and was given a grave in the waters of the ocean.



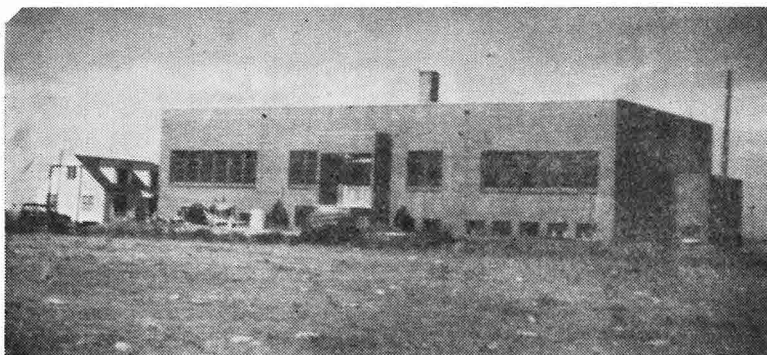
Post Oak Mennonite Brethren Church

As early as 1894 the brethren of the Conference looked for mission opportunities among the Indians in this country and for workers to serve in such a work. The territory in Oklahoma which was the home of the Comanche Indians was after considerable study chosen as a field for missionary activity. The United States government made a grant of 160 acres of land, five miles north of Indianahoma, for the mission. Rev. and Mrs. Heinrich Kohfeld were appointed missionaries to this field. The erection of a mission home and a church was soon begun. The field was known as the Post Oak Mission. Rev. J. S. Dick and his wife Tina served as missionaries here.

Rev. Heinrich Kohfeld started this work with no members. Today there are 178 members at this mission station. The Sunday School consists of 14 classes. Rev. Herman J. Neufeld is the pastor.

Mission School at Indiahoma

A home and a Mission School was erected on a sizeable acreage a little north and west of the city of Indiahoma in 1948. The school under the direction of a number of teachers is in operation at this time.



Post Oak Mission School, Indiahoma, Oklahoma



Rev. and Mrs. D. J. Gerbrandt, Indiahoma, Oklahoma

Rev. and Mrs. D. J. Gerbrandt served as missionaries at the Post Oak Mission a number of years. At present they are field missionaries to the Indians and the Mexicans in this part of Oklahoma.

Weatherford

The Weatherford Mennonite Brethren Church is the latest Mennonite Brethren Church to come into existence. Weatherford is located on United States Highway 66, known as the Main Street of the United States and used by more people crossing the country than any other. The highway through



Weatherford Mennonite Brethren Church

Weatherford furnishes a direct route between the East and California and between Kansas and Oklahoma and California.

The church at Weatherford was organized January 17, 1954, with 16 members present. There are four Sunday School classes. Rev. Victor Becker is the pastor.

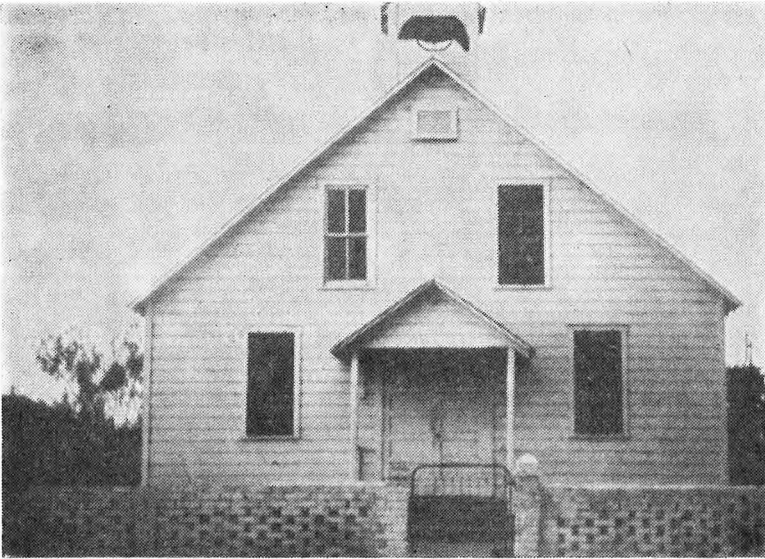
Texas

Texas belongs to the Southern District of the Mennonite Brethren Conference. It has three Mennonite Brethren churches.

Los Ebanos

The Southern District Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church began a mission work in south Texas, near the border of Old Mexico, in 1937. The field is on the banks of the Rio Grande River, which forms the boundary line between Mexico and the United States and flows into the Gulf of Mexico at Brownsville.

The lower part of Texas can well be called the California of Texas. The cold north winds seldom reach as far south as south Texas. This region has thus become known for its



Los Ebanos Mennonite Brethren Church

grapefruit, many kinds of oranges, and other kinds of fruits and vegetables. Persons sensitive to more severe climates, find the climate here healthful.

In these parts are found many people in need of the gospel of Jesus Christ. They are largely Mexicans. Many of them are illiterate.

Rev. and Mrs. Harry Neufeld were sent to this field as missionaries of the Southern District Conference. The Neufelds located in the Los Ebanos community. Here they have

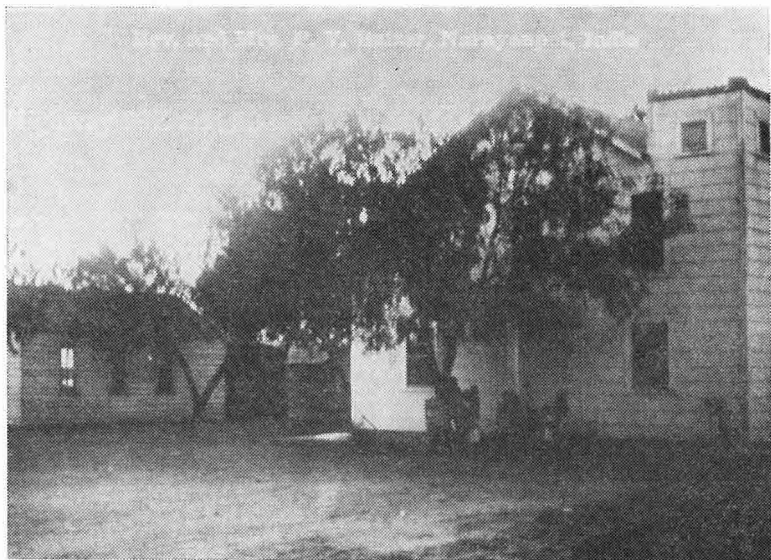
labored long and hard in this great work. Later other missionaries came and new stations were opened.

The Los Ebanos Mennonite Brethren Church was organized in 1938 with eight members. Rev. Harry Neufeld was the first pastor. At present the church has 50 members. The Sunday school consists of seven classes. One extension station is served by this group. Two members of the church serve on the foreign mission field and two on the home mission field. Rev. Neufeld is the present pastor.

The church building at Los Ebanos was designed and built by Rev. Neufeld and friends of home missions in the Southern District.

Chihuahua

As the mission work in South Texas grew, a second church was started at Chihuahua, a village nearer to Mission. The



Chihuahua Mennonite Brethren Church

church was organized April 27, 1941, with ten members. Rev. Harry Neufeld was the first pastor here.

The church at present has 69 members and a Sunday school of seven classes. The church has one extension station.

This group was early placed under the direction of Rev. H. F. Thomas, who is the pastor of this church at this time.

A third mission station was opened at the village of Grulla in 1946. Rev. Ruben Wedel is pastor of this church.

The Texas mission stations can be reached by taking Highway 281, which originates in South Dakota and goes through Hastings, Nebraska, Great Bend, Kansas, Lawton, Oklahoma, and Wichita Falls, Texas. A trip to southern Texas is a wonderful experience for people living in the northern states.

Premont

Elder H. H. Flaming, a well-known brother and the only living Elder in the Mennonite Conference in America, who lived



Premont Mennonite Brethren Church

at Corn, Oklahoma, found himself afflicted with a neuralgic condition, from which he could find relief only in the warm climate of South Texas. He and his family made their homes, therefore, near Premont, Texas. Others soon followed and established their homes here.

Premont is located on Highway 281, about 100 miles north of the border between the United States and Old Mexico. The

climate is summerlike throughout the year. Farmers grow citrus fruits, vegetables, and grain. Much oil has been found in this area, making Premont a wealthy community.

On November 17, 1929, a group of members of the Menonite Brethren Church organized the Premont Church. Rev. H. H. Flaming was the first minister.

Today the church has a Sunday school of five classes. It has 55 active members. Rev. Lewis H. Boese is the pastor.

Chapter 5

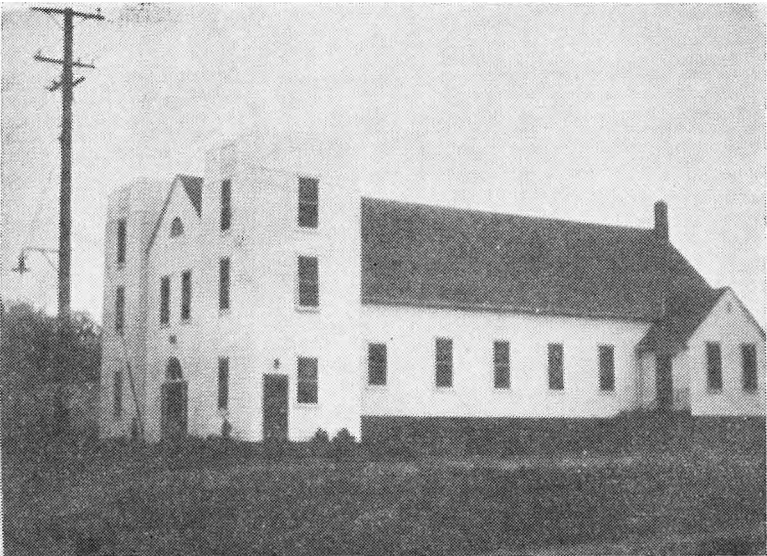
THE MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCHES OF THE CENTRAL DISTRICT CONFERENCE

Minnesota

Minnesota belongs to the Central District of the Mennonite Brethren Conference and has two Mennonite Brethren Churches.

Bingham Lake

Immigrants coming to the United States were sought as settlers for the open plains of the Middle West. The govern-

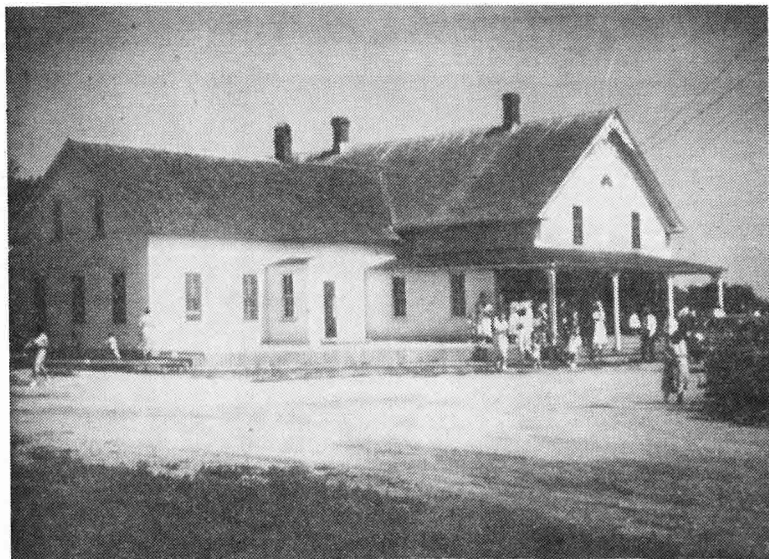


Bingham Lake Mennonite Brethren Church

ment had made large grants of land to railroad companies engaged in developing the new territories in the West. The agents of railroad companies were contacting Mennonites seeking to interest and settle them on their extensive tracts. Those advertising Kansas lands would do what they could to get the settlers, while the representatives of land in the northern states

would point out that Kansas and Nebraska were hot and dry and that the Minnesota lands were more desirable. During the first year of the coming of Mennonite immigrants to this country, Kansas and Nebraska received the larger numbers, but in 1875 a greater number settled in the state of Minnesota.

Minnesota is the land of ten thousand lakes. Fishing is a great occupation. To the new settlers this proved a great blessing. The early settlers said of the early days, "Whenever the supply of meat ran short, we go fishing."



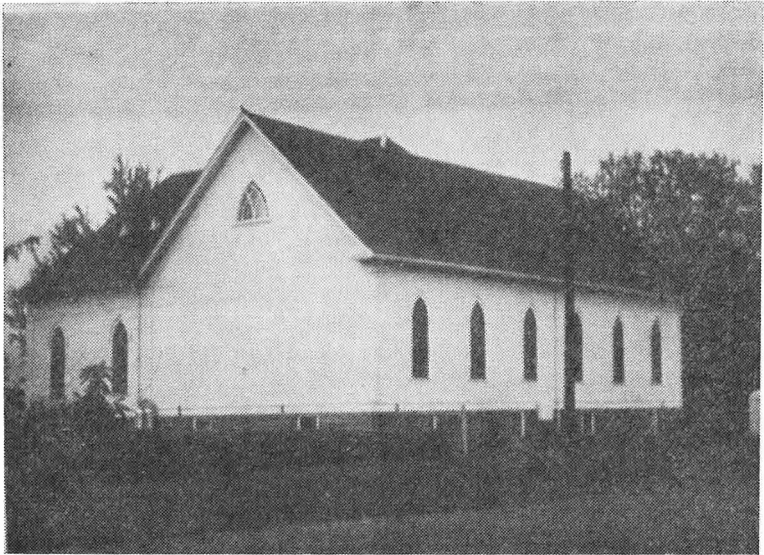
Former Bingham Lake Mennonite Brethren Church

In the year 1875 the Bingham Lake Mennonite Brethren Church was started by the late Elder Heinrich Voth with eleven members. In the course of years many members of the congregation made their homes in and around the small place of Delft, so that, when the time for remodeling the building came, the congregation decided to erect a new church building in Delft. It was not an easy matter for the older members to give up the former rural church home even though they consented to it. The new church building was completed in 1948. The old building was dismantled. Rev. William Neufeld, at present the pastor of the San Jose Church, was the leader of the church during the building program.

The church at the present time has 164 members. There are 19 Sunday school classes. Four missionaries from the church are on the foreign field. Rev. G. S. Warkentin is the pastor of the church.

A number of Conference workers have come from the Bingham Lake Church. Included in this number are Rev. John H. Voth and Rev. Frank Janzen, both missionaries to India, and also Rev. H. S. Voth, a much-loved evangelist in the Conference.

Mountain Lake



Mountain Lake Mennonite Brethren Church

Between the cities of Windom and St. James lies the town of Mountain Lake on Highway 60. Those who visit Mountain Lake quickly agree that this is a beauty spot in the state of Minnesota. The name Mountain Lake is derived from the lake with a mountain in it located east of the town site. The lake at this time, however, has been drained and is being farmed. In its place an artificial lake has been built.

The Mountain Lake Mennonite Brethren Church was organized in 1875 under the leadership of Elder Heinrich Voth with 20 charter members.

The church today has a Sunday school of 22 classes. The membership is 258. Four missionaries from the church are on the foreign field. Rev. J. G. Baerg is the pastor.

The church building has in recent years been completely remodeled and a parsonage built near the church. Both the church building and the parsonage are located in the south part of town. The Mountain Lake Church furnished the grounds on which was held the Convention of the Mennonite Brethren General Conference in 1948.

The Mountain Lake Church, the Bingham Lake Church, and the Ebenfeld Church in Kansas were the first churches built by the early brethren of the Mennonite Brethren Conference.

Montana

Montana belongs to the Central District of the Mennonite Brethren Conference. It has two Mennonite Brethren churches.

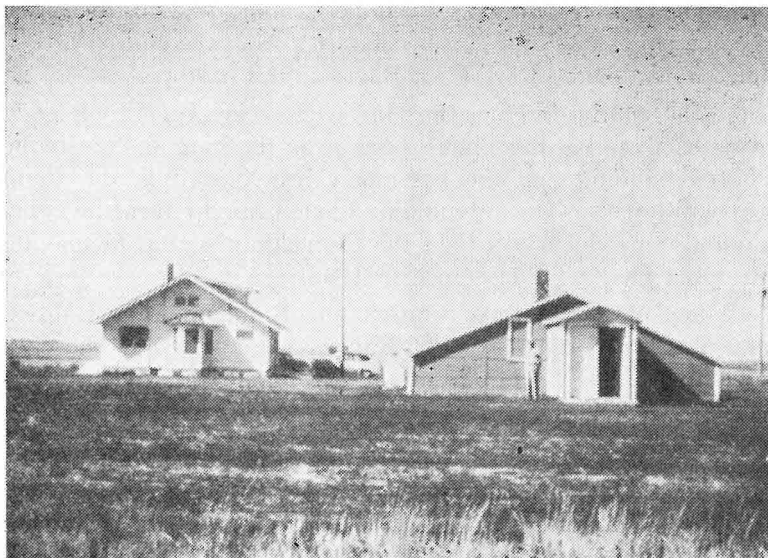
Larshan

A number of homeseekers from Nebraska moved to the Fort Peck Indian Reservation on the vast prairie lands of north-eastern Montana when the reservation was opened for settlement years ago. The group settled in the community known as Volt.

The Mennonite settlements in Montana are a long distance from the railroad and the highway. Larshan is about 30 miles due north of Frazer, which is located on Highway 2 crossing the state from east to west. A gravel road connects Larshan with the highway.

Grain-farming and cattle raising are the chief occupations in these parts. This area is known for its big grain crops when rains come in season. The long hauls necessary to deliver crops and cattle to the railroad were time-consuming and a difficult chore for the early settlers.

The Larshan Mennonite Brethren Church was organized October 29, 1945, with 26 members present. Rev. Carl Dick, who came to the church in 1945, was its first full-time pastor. Rev. H. J. Enns accepted the leadership of the church in 1950. The church provides a parsonage for its pastor.



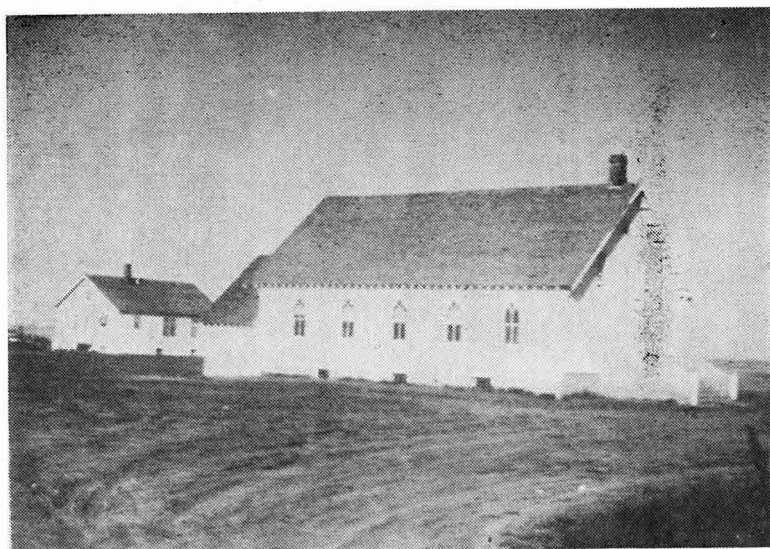
Larslan Mennonite Brethren Church

Today the church has five Sunday school classes. One missionary from the church is on the foreign mission field. There are 39 members. Rev. Walter Schlichting is the pastor. The services of the church at present are conducted in the basement of the proposed church building.

Lustre

Montana is known for its open prairies and it is also known for its mountainous country with thousands of acres of forest land, and the most beautiful mountain park in the United States, the Glacier National Park, with its wonderful glaciers, lakes, and canyons.

Among the Mennonites who came to the Fort Peck Reservation region when it was opened to settlers, there was a group that settled in the Lustre community, where today can be found some of the finest improved farms. The gravel road from Highway 2 at Frazer and Oswago goes north to the Reservation with one branch going to Lustre and another to Larslan. The Fort Peck Dam across the Missouri River, the largest earth dam in the world, is about 50 miles south. At the time of



Lustre Mennonite Brethren Church

its construction many settlers of the Lustre and Larslan communities found profitable work here.

The Mennonite Brethren Church at Lustre was organized November 17, 1917, under the leadership of Rev. J. F. Thiesen, who passed away at his home in Hillsboro a year ago.

Today the church has 131 members. The Sunday school has 12 classes. One extension station is supplied by the church. Four missionaries have gone to the foreign mission field from this church. Rev. Leo S. Wiens is the pastor.

Nebraska

Nebraska belongs to the Central District of the Mennonite Brethren Conference and has three Mennonite Brethren churches.

Culbertson

The town of Culbertson is located on Highway 6 going from Chicago to Denver in the western part of the state. It is about 75 miles east of the Colorado line and about 12 miles west of McCook.



Culbertson Mennonite Brethren Church

The record of the Mennonite Brethren Church at Culbertson is not clear. The recollections of its early members would indicate that the beginnings of the church date back as far as 1909, Brother John Wacker, who later moved to Reedley, California, and died there, was the first minister. Rev. Adam Ross, who has passed to his reward, served as pastor of this church. Later Rev. Raymond Laird was pastor.

At present the church has 13 members. There are three Sunday school classes. Rev. P. P. Baltzer is the pastor.

Eldorado

The date of the organization of the Eldorado Mennonite Brethren Church is not known. It may have been before 1900. The pastor of the Church at one time was Henry Heiser. Members of the church left the community and those that remained affiliated with congregations of other denominations. The church building was sold about six years ago.

A Mennonite Brethren Church was located in Sutton a number of years. This church was led by Rev. Christian Deines.



Eldorado Mennonite Brethren Church

There was also a church at Hastings, about 50 miles west of Henderson. Rev. John Brahm was the pastor.

These churches were active at one time and now have ceased to work. Various circumstances played a part in making it necessary to close their doors. Could it be that someone failed in the performance of duty?

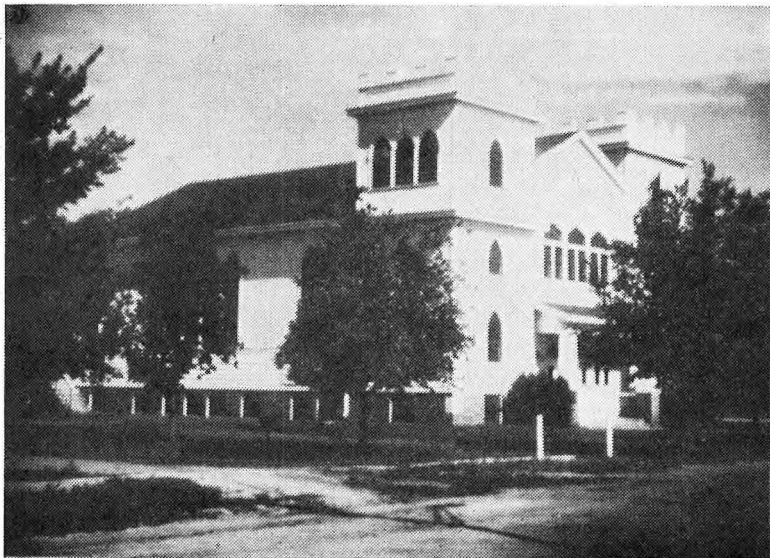
Henderson

The Burlington Railroad played an important part in settling immigrants in Nebraska, just as the Santa Fe Railroad played its part in Kansas. A group of Mennonite immigrants through the efforts of Cornelius Jansen and his son Peter purchased 10,000 acres of railroad land in Jefferson County. Beatrice was the nearest trading center for the group until in 1887 the Rock Island Railroad laid its tracks in the middle of this area, the so-called Russian Lane. The town of Jansen was located on the new railroad. It was known as the first saloonless town in Nebraska. This was accomplished when Jansen insisted that into every deed be written a clause stating that never a saloon could be built on the ground described in the deed.

The Mennonite Brethren Church in Jansen was started by Rev. Isaac Wall and grew to have a sizeable membership. When in later years many members moved away to other places, the church was given up and the building sold. Rev. Isaac Wall and his son Henry and their families moved to Reedley, California. Here Rev. Wall lived to an age of 101 years and then passed to his reward.

Henderson

A group of Mennonite settlers purchased land north of Sutton in York and Hamilton Counties and settled. Within the group were many who had made the voyage on the steamship *Switzerland* from Antwerp to Philadelphia in 1879. The



Henderson Mennonite Brethren Church

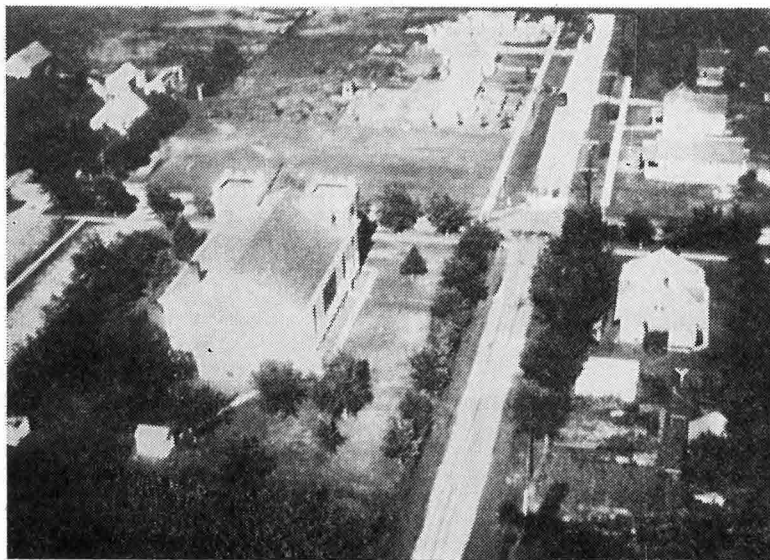
town of Henderson was founded in the heart of this settlement in 1878.

The Henderson Mennonite Brethren Church was organized in 1877 with 30 charter members. The first pastor was Rev. Peter Regier. When after a few years Rev. Johann J. Regier, the brother of Peter Regier, from Boone County moved into this community, he became the leader of the church. Rev. Johann J. Regier was ordained as Elder and served the church

until 1902 when Rev. J. J. Kliewer succeeded him. Rev. Kliewer was ordained Elder by Elder Heinrich Voth. He served the church until the early twenties when he moved to the state of Washington.

The church at present has 275 members. Its Sunday school program consists of 16 classes. One extension station is maintained by the church. Three missionaries from the church have gone out to the foreign mission field. Rev. Henry R. Baerg is the pastor.

The church building was moved from the location two and one-half miles northwest of Henderson into the town of Henderson at the time when Rev. Gerhard Wiens was the leader.



Henderson Mennonite Brethren Church

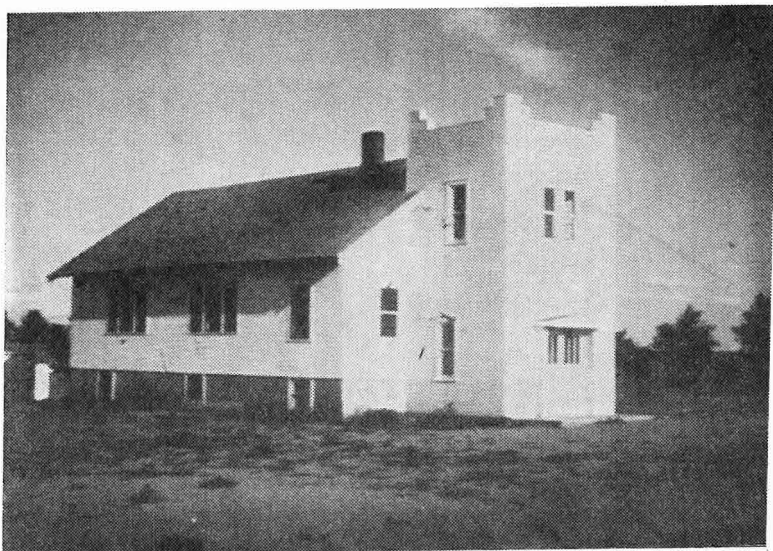
The Henderson Church celebrated its Diamond Jubilee in 1952.

Many members of the church have gone into other communities, both near and far, and continued building the Church of Jesus Christ where they located. Among the places in which former Henderson members settled and worked can be counted Enid and North Enid in Oklahoma, Paxton in Nebraska, Colorado, Munich in North Dakota, and various places in Kansas and California. Missionaries that have gone out from this

church include Rev. and Mrs. F. J. Wiens, Mrs. Tina S. Dick, Tina Kornelsen, and Rev. and Mrs. B. F. Wiens. These all were active on the mission field in China. Mrs. J. S. Dick and Mrs. B. F. Wiens are still active in various missionary activities in this country. The others have left this scene of activity and gone to be with the Lord whom they faithfully served.

Paxton

Paxton is a settlement extending from the town by that name west to the station Roscoe and about 10 miles south to Madrid. It is 33 miles west of North Platte, which is located on Highway 30 beginning at Atlantic City, New Jersey, on the



Paxton Mennonite Brethren Church:

East Coast and stretching across the country to Astoria, Washington, on the West Coast touching cities such as Chicago, Omaha, Salt Lake City in Utah, Pocatella in Idaho, and Portland, Oregon. Paxton is located between the North Platte and the South Platte Rivers.

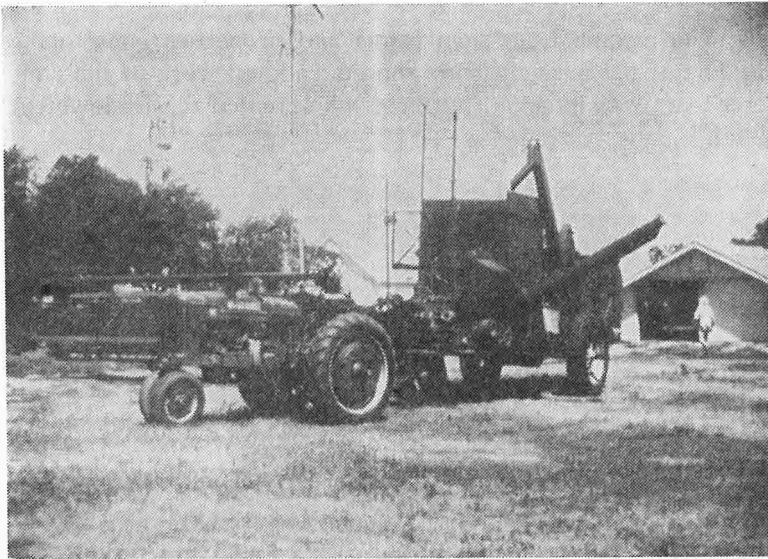
The Union Pacific and the Burlington Railroads move the thousands of bushels of winter wheat grown in this western part of Nebraska.

Former members of the Jansen Mennonite Brethren Church, when in search of lower-priced lands, settled in this area and prospered. The Mennonite Brethren Church was organized in 1918 with about 30 members. Rev. H. C. Flaming was the first pastor.

The church today has eight Sunday school classes and a membership of 75. Three missionaries from the church have gone to the foreign mission field. Rev. LaVern Loewens is the pastor.

The church building is located about ten miles southwest of Paxton and about 16 miles northeast of Madrid. The parsonage and grounds enough for a cow and chickens are located near the church building.

Conference Farm



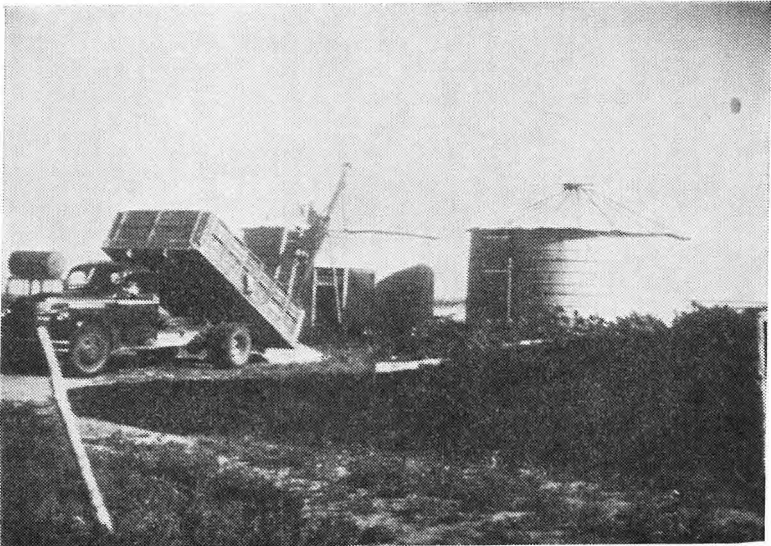
Ready for the Wheat Harvest in Western Nebraska

In the 1940's Endowment Fund money was invested in a farm a few miles west of the Paxton Church with the understanding that brethren of the church would farm the land for the Conference.

Farming in this wheat belt of Nebraska is done on a large scale. Combines move into the large fields of ripe grain and in one operation cut the wheat, thresh it, and deliver it into large trucks. The trucks take the grain to storage elevators or to storage bins. The storage bins are a good investment because they allow holding the wheat until it has the best price and it also provides storage at harvest time when often the elevators are filled.

The Conference has possession of a number of farms. Some of these have been purchased with Endowment Fund money as an investment and others have been deeded by owners to the Conference mission program. The latter is an arrangement whereby those with property interested in having and leaving capital working for the Lord, can assign to the Board of Trustees property that will provide means for carrying the Lord's work during their lifetime and long after they have finished their course in this life.

The income from such farms and properties goes to the support of the mission work and educational work of the conference as was intended by those who created the Endowment Fund.



Delivering the Wheat into Steel Bins for Storage

North Dakota

North Dakota belongs to the Central District of the Mennonite Brethren Conference. There are five Mennonite Brethren churches in the state.

Harvey

A group of Mennonite Brethren people settled in the vicinity of Harvey, the center of this great wheat-farming state, about 95 miles southwest of Devil's lake. The center of activity for these people was south and west of Harvey. A small stream, the Sheyenne River flows through the settlement.

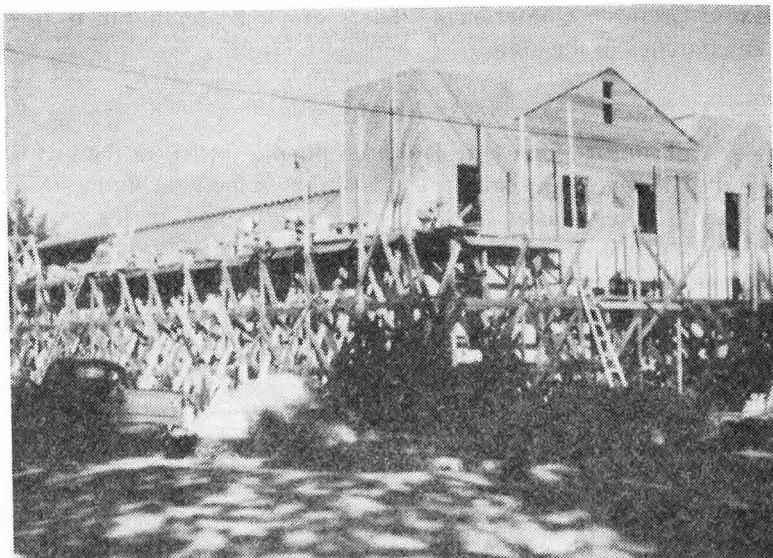


Harvey Country Mennonite Brethren Church

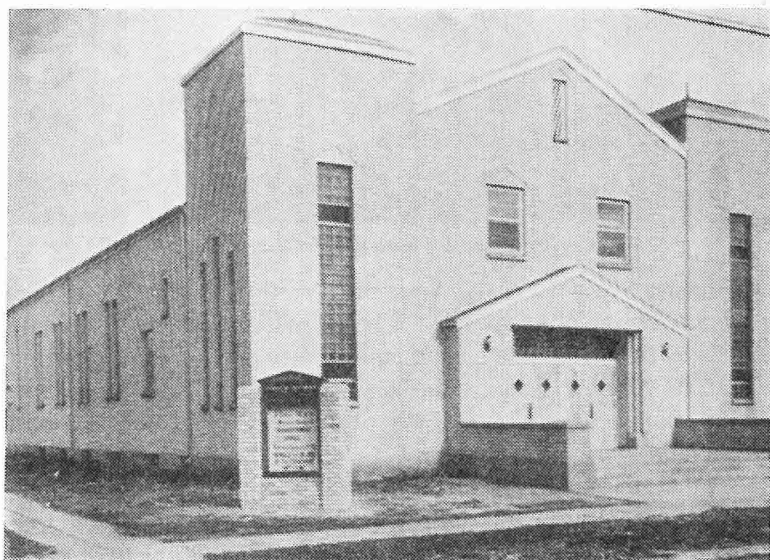
In 1898 the Harvey Mennonite Brethren Church was organized with ten members. Rev. Christian Reimche became the first pastor of the group and continued in this position about 30 years. Brother Ludwig Seibel settled his large family in this community. Two of his sons became leading physicians in Harvey.

Since the members of the church were exclusively farmers at first, the church building was located a considerable distance from Harvey. Members, however, began to move into the city of Harvey and soon there was a need for a church

there. At the time when Rev. Gerhard Warkentin was the pastor of the group, a new church building was erected in Har-



Harvey City Mennonite Brethren Church Under Construction



Harvey City Mennonite Brethren Church

vey. Services are now conducted in both places with a joint service each month.

The church has 20 Sunday school classes. There are 210 members. Rev. Loyal Funk is the pastor of the church.

Kief



Kief Mennonite Brethren Church

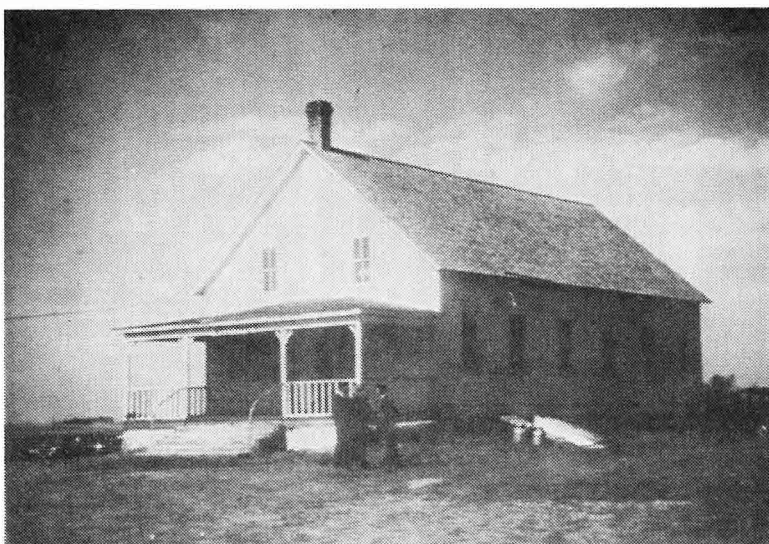
About half way between Harvey and Sawyer is the town of Kief located about six miles south of Highway 52. A group of people from Russia settled this community. Some are in business in Kief, others are farming, raising wheat, barley, oats, flax, and livestock.

In 1910 a church was organized among these Russian-speaking brethren with Rev. E. Lushenko as the pastor. In 1948 at the Convention of the Central District Conference, the church was accepted as a member of the Central District. This is the only Russian-speaking church in the Conference.

The church today has six Sunday school classes. One member is a candidate as missionary to the foreign mission field. The membership is 40. Rev. A. J. Neufeld is the pastor.

Munich

The settlement of Mennonite Brethren members was started in the Munich community when in 1897 a group of homeseekers left Henderson, Nebraska, in covered wagons and headed north until they came to Munich and settled there. Some of these settlers homesteaded here, others bought land. The group faced real difficulties but was determined to make a new home for themselves and their children. Munich is about 50 miles due south of Winkler, Manitoba.



Munich Mennonite Brethren Church

A group of 90 joined themselves together and organized the Rosehill Mennonite Brethren Church. Rev. Johann Enns was the first pastor.

At present there are eight Sunday school classes in the church. A 30-minute broadcast is sponsored weekly. Two missionaries on the foreign mission field come from the church. There are 60 members. Rev. G. W. Schroeder is the pastor.

Sawyer

Sawyer lies 16 miles southeast of Minot on the Souris River, which comes out of Saskatchewan, makes a deep dip



Sawyer Mennonite Brethren Church

into the United States, and then turns up sharply into Canada again emptying into Assinibone River. To the south of Sawyer are many coal mines furnishing the people cheap fuel and giving many employment.

The Sawyer Mennonite Brethren Church is a rural church with its building located about ten miles south and a little west of Sawyer. The church was organized in 1909 with eight members. Rev. George Beck was the first pastor.

The church today has 98 members. It has a Sunday school of eight classes. One young couple will be leaving for the foreign mission field within a year. Rev. Frank Wiens is the present pastor. Rev. Wiens is scheduled to leave for another church in April of 1954.

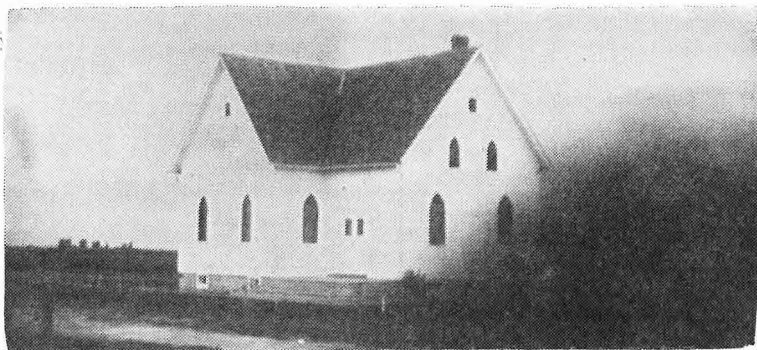
South Dakota

South Dakota belongs to the Central District Conference. There is one Mennonite Brethren Church in South Dakota.

Marion

Mennonites settled in South Dakota upon invitation of railroad companies to settle their lands as they did in the states of Kansas, Nebraska, and Minnesota. Among the Mennonites

of South Dakota are found Hutterites, Krimmer Mennonite Brethren, and General Conference Mennonites. The Mennonite Brethren group settled on the level farming land near the beautiful Silver Lake east of Highway 81 about 10 miles west of Marion.



Silver Lake Mennonite Brethren Church

The early settlers of the Mennonite Brethren faith were shepherded by the late Elder Heinrich Adrian, who was the first leader of the group. The church at Marion was organized in 1878 with about 40 charter members.

The church at present has a membership of 140. The Sunday school has 13 classes. Two missionaries on the foreign mission field come from this church. The church maintains one extension station. The pastor is Rev. M. A. Kroeker.



Rev. and Mrs. G. S. Warkentin of the Silver Lake Mennonite Brethren Church with Mrs. Wiens

Chapter 6

THE MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCHES OF THE ALBERTA PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE

Alberta belongs to the Canadian Mennonite Brethren Conference. It has ten Mennonite Brethren churches. These churches are organized as the Alberta Provincial Conference.

An excerpt from an article in the Alberta Historical Review written by Peter F. Barga has the following in regard to the settlement of Mennonites in Canada: Mennonite immigration to Canada falls into four definite periods: (1) the movement into upper Canada from the United States in 1786 after the American Revolution, (2) the movement in the 1870s from Russia into Canada and the United States, (3) the coming of the Russian Mennonites in 1923 to 1930, and (4) the movement of displaced persons after World War II and until the present.

The Mennonite settlers in 1873 had advanced to them \$100,000 as help in getting established. This amount had been paid back in 1892. The promptness and honesty of these early settlers in meeting their obligation was an important factor in securing a \$2,000,000 credit from the Canadian Pacific Railroad that helped settle the Mennonite immigrants in 1923-1930.

The first Mennonite settlers in Alberta were Old Mennonites who came in 1902.

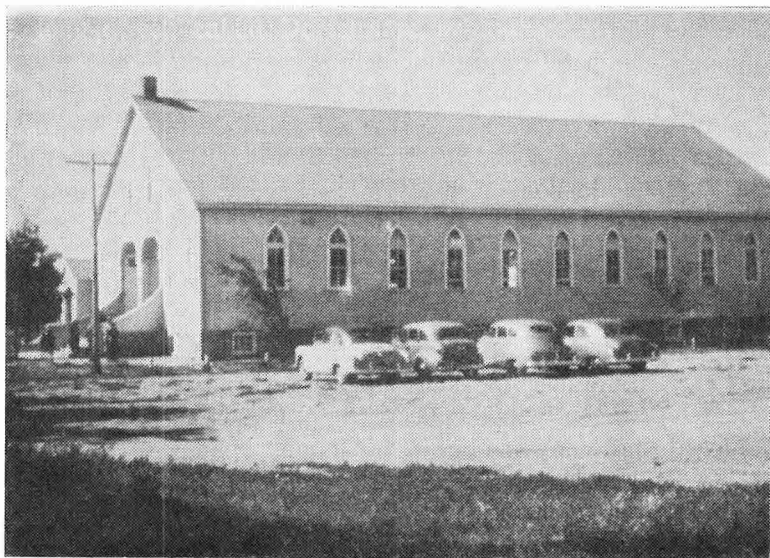
Coaldale

The first Mennonite Brethren settlement in Alberta began in 1926 when Klass Enns, who had come to Canada from Russia in 1925, stopped in Manitoba, and then continued west to Alberta, with his three brothers, purchased a large farm from a Mr. Lathrop, agent for the Canadian Pacific Railroad. In the spring of 1926 the four brothers and their families settled here. By the end of the year forty families had come. Ten years later there were 208 Mennonite families with 1144 persons in the Coaldale area owning and farming 20,700 acres of land. Coaldale has remained the center of the Mennonite Brethren settlements in this province.

Surrounding Coaldale is a tract of 100,000 acres of good irrigated farm land. Old Man River supplies the water for irrigation in this district. Coaldale is located on Highway 3 and is the first station east of Lethbridge.

The Coaldale Mennonite Brethren Church was organized with twelve brothers and nine sisters on May 23, 1926. Rev. Klaas Enns was the first leader.

Besides having a large house of worship, the church maintains a Bible School and a High School on the church grounds, about one-half mile north of the town.

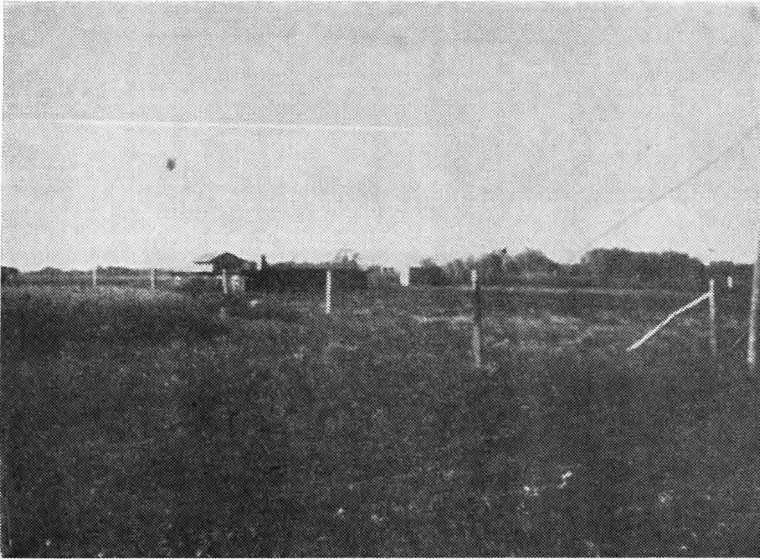


Coaldale Mennonite Brethren Church

In 1928 the churches of Alberta united and organized the Alberta Provincial Conference. This Conference in 1951 included the following churches: Coaldale, Gem, Grassy Lake, La Glace, Lindbrook, Linden, Namaka, Pincher Creek, and Vauxhall. These churches at that time had a combined membership of 1163.

Today the Coaldale church has 605 members. There are 30 Sunday school classes. One extension station is taken care of by the church. Three brothers and four sisters from the church are in foreign mission service. Rev. Jacob Siemens is the pastor.

Crowfoot



Crowfoot Mennonite Brethren Church

A little church was started at Crowfoot about 75 miles east of Calgary. After the organization, the building of the church house was begun, but only the basement was completed. The people moved to British Columbia and other places leaving the beginning of the church building a landmark of a work once begun.

Gem

Gem is about 80 miles east of Calgary and about 80 miles north of Taber on Highway 3. It is a gem where irrigation has made a wonderful spot in an otherwise wild-looking desert country. The water for irrigation comes from the Bow River which originates in the Rocky Mountains west and north of Calgary. A large dam across the river at Bassano holds the water which is then brought in canals into the Gem district. Wheat and stock raising are the principal occupations of the farmers in this area.



Gem Mennonite Brethren Church

On June 2, 1929, about 30 members organized the Mennonite Brethren Church. Rev. H. K. Siemens was the first pastor.

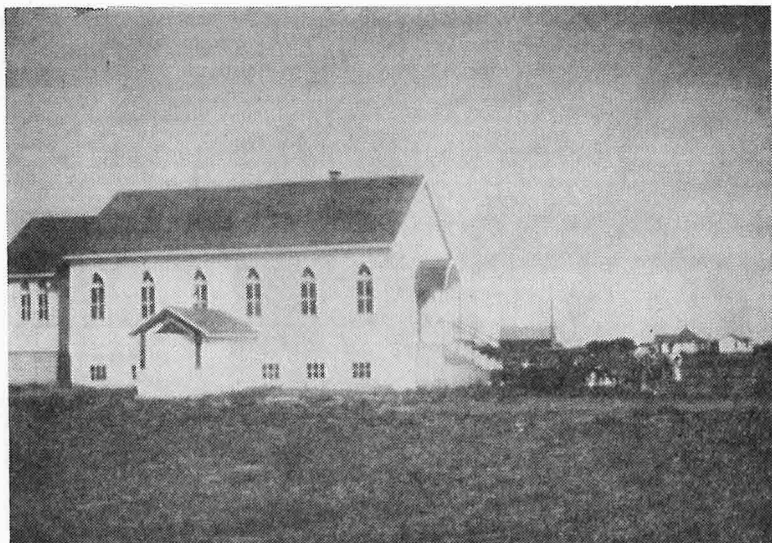
The church today has 12 Sunday school classes. One member is a missionary in the foreign mission field. The membership is 134. Rev. P. P. Doerksen is the pastor.

Grassy Lake

In 1926 when so many Mennonite Brethren settlers came to Coaldale there were some who stopped and settled in the Grassy Lake district on Highway 1 about 60 miles east of Coaldale. Here are large tracts of dry-farming grain-growing lands. Aggressive persons who worked as farm hands later bought out large land-owners. Irrigation was being introduced in 1951 with Old Man River furnishing the water.

More people came into this settlement so that in 1928 a Mennonite Brethren Church of 12 members was organized. Rev. P. Neufeld was the first pastor.

Today the church has four Sunday school classes and 40 members. Rev. David Penner is the pastor.



Grassy Lake Mennonite Brethren Church

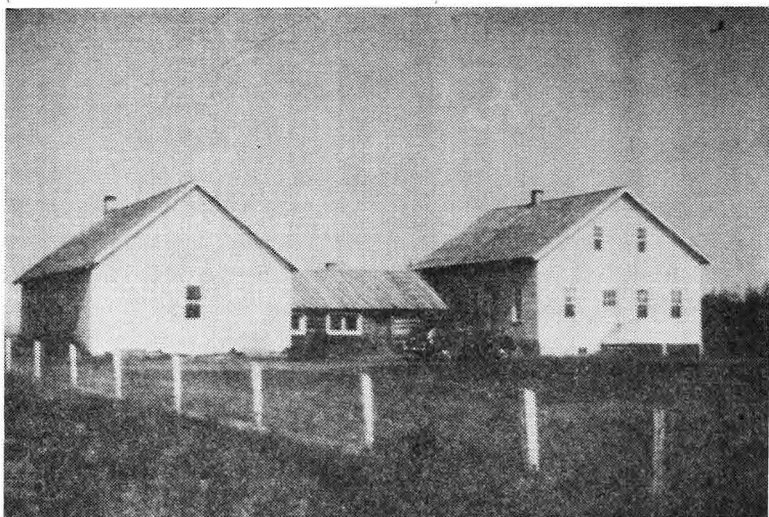
La Glace

The Peace River district in which La Glace is located is in the extreme northwest corner of the province. The Mennonites coming to this part of Alberta were looking for lower-priced farm lands and homes. There are opportunities in farming in the far Northwest, but there are also the dangers of early frosts doing damage to the crops.

A group of seven members was organized as the Mennonite Brethren Church here in 1926. Rev. N. N. Siebert was the first pastor.

The church today has six Sunday school classes. The membership is 68. Rev. E. C. Martens is the pastor. The La Glace Church is the Mennonite Brethren Church nearest the North Pole.

There are three ways of getting to the Peace River district. It is possible to travel a distance of 400 miles by train and get there in a little more than a day. Highway 2, which is paved up to Edmonton but beyond Edmonton is not paved, goes through this section. It follows the Lesser Slave River and the Peace River to La Glace, which is 40 miles northwest



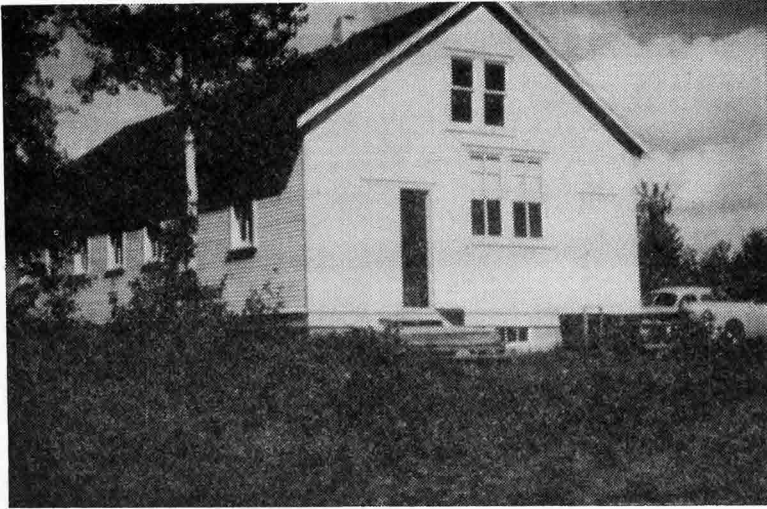
La Glace Mennonite Brethren Church

of Grand Prairie, the largest city in the Peace River area. La Glace is 60 miles from Dawson Creek to the west where the Alaska Highway, built by the United States government during the Second World War, begins. The most direct and most pleasant mode of travel is a two-hour trip by air, flying over much level farm land for about 100 miles and then over the mountains and the wastelands farther north.

Lindbrook

Peter F. Barga, M. A., writing in the Alberta Historical Review states that an old Mennonite settlement in this region can be traced to the activities of two brothers, O. C. and T. A. Blackburn from Nebraska. Homeseekers excursions took place in 1907 and in 1910 the first group of Mennonite settlers moved into the Tofield district.

Lindbrook is located in the Tofield area on Highway 14 about 40 miles southeast of Edmonton, the largest city of Alberta. Much brush has been cleared away providing fine farms in this area, but there remains very much more to be removed. On most of the land south of Lindbrook are found deposits of coal lying close to the surface, which can be mined by the



Lindbrook Mennonite Brethren Church

process of strip mining. The Canadian government, however, owns the mineral rights, so that land owners are not especially benefitted, except that they can buy fuel at reasonable prices.

The church at Lindbrook, which is located about eight miles west of Tofield, was organized with 14 members. Rev. Abraham Froese was the first pastor.

At present the church has five Sunday school classes. There are 49 members. Rev. Peter J. Warkentin is the pastor.

Linden

About 40 miles west of Drumheller and 60 miles north-east of Calgary is the German settlement of Linden. This is a dry-farming section where wheat, barley and oats are grown. Dairy farming has become important here. Three Hills, known for the Three Hills Bible Institute, is about 30 miles east of Linden.

In 1930 a group of believers organized the Mennonite Brethren Church at Linden. Rev. N. A. Rempel was the first pastor.

At present there are 94 members in the church. The Sunday school consists of seven classes. One extension station is



Linden Mennonite Brethren Church

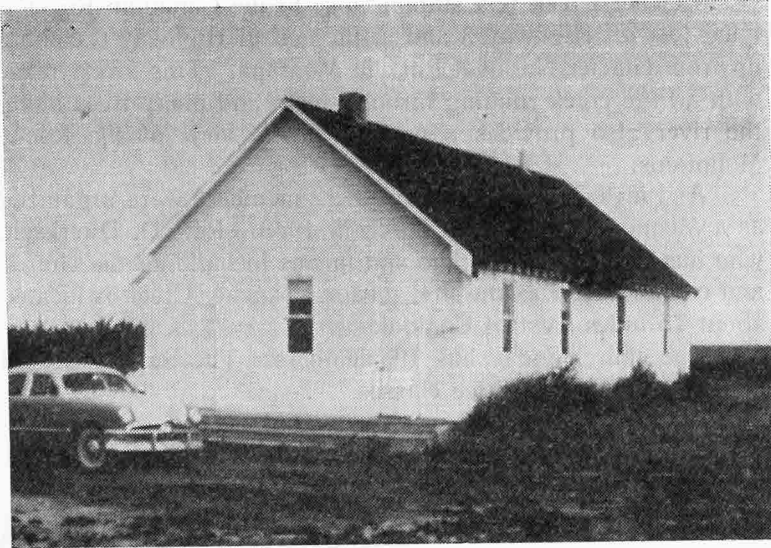
supplied by the church. One missionary from the church is on the foreign mission field. Rev. Sam Ratzlaff is the leader.

Namaka

Namaka is located about 30 miles east and a few miles south of Calgary near Highway 1, running from Vancouver, British Columbia, through British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and to Montreal. This trans-Canadian highway is an all-year hard-surface highway connecting the strategic places of Canada. Namaka is also near the most noted Canadian National Parks, the Banff National Park and the Jasper National Park, and other smaller parks in the Canadian Rockies. This part of Alberta is known for its summer resorts and its winter sports.

A church with 37 members was organized in Namaka in February of 1927. Rev. A. A. Toews, at present of Clearbrook, British Columbia, was the first pastor.

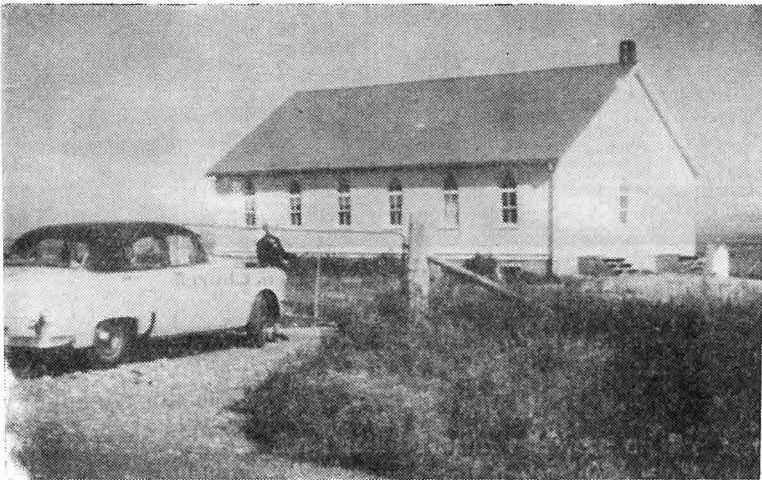
The church today has 36 members and a Sunday school of three classes. One missionary from the church is active on the foreign mission field. Many of the former members of this



Namaka Mennonite Brethren Church

church now reside in British Columbia. Rev. G. Dirks is the pastor.

Pincher Creek



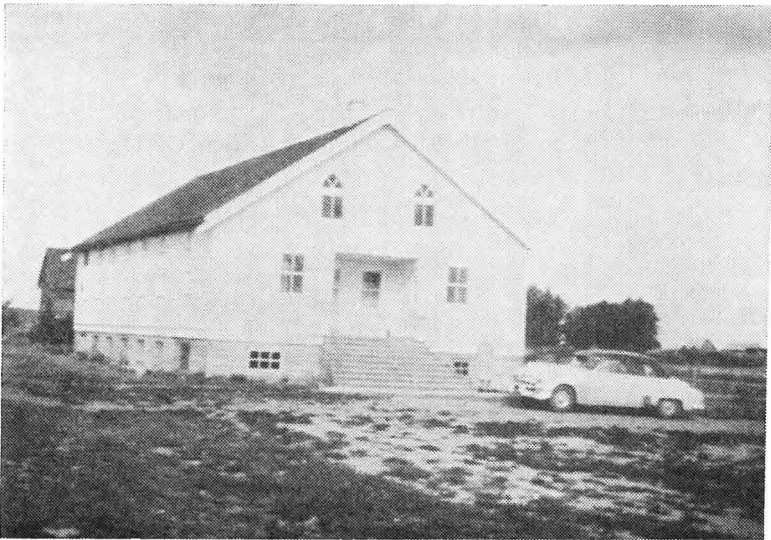
Pincher Creek Mennonite Brethren Church

Pincher Creek is a station close to the Canadian Rockies, lying just off Highway 3 and at the end of Highway 6 coming up from Glacier National Park in Montana. This lovely place with a little creek running through town and many trees along the river also provides a most beautiful view of the Rocky Mountains.

At Pincher Creek a group of 22 members were organized as a Mennonite Brethren Church in 1948. Rev. D. Duerksen, who has given much in time and means in building the church and community, was the first pastor. Pincher Creek is located about 75 miles west of Coaldale.

The church today has 19 members. The Sunday school program consists of three classes.

Vauxhall



Vauxhall Mennonite Brethren Church

About 80 miles north of Taber on Highway 3 and a short distance south of the Bow River is the Vauxhall Mennonite Brethren Church, a rural church. The crops in this community consist of grain and other staple foods grown with irrigation using water from the Bow River. Livestock is an important source of income in the community.

The Yearbook of the Canadian Conference lists the membership of this church as being 111. Rev. David Baerg is the leader. The brethren Fr. Friesen, B. P. Epp, and H. Unruh are ministers.

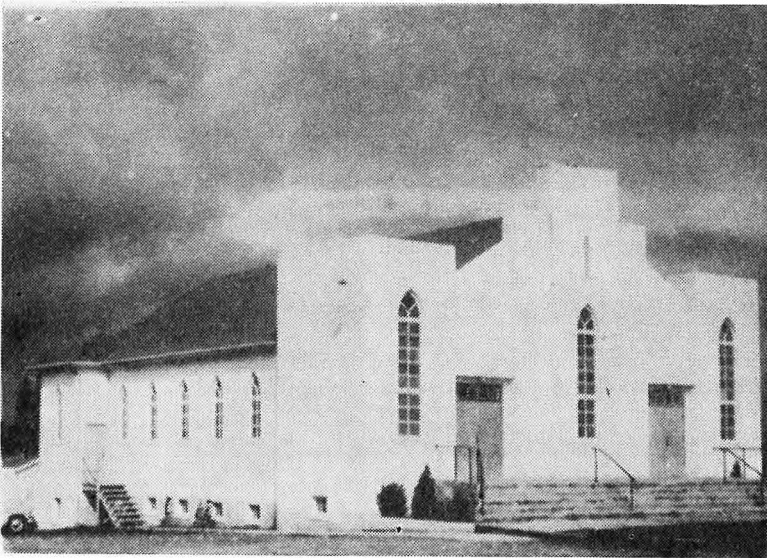
Chapter 7

THE MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCHES OF THE BRITISH COLUMBIA PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE

British Columbia belongs to the Canadian Mennonite Brethren Conference. Fifteen Mennonite Brethren Churches are located here. These churches are organized as the British Columbia Provincial Conference.

Abbotsford

Abbotsford is located on the west end of the Sumas Prairie. During the great flood in 1948 the Fraser River water



Abbotsford Mennonite Brethren Church

came within a few blocks of its city limits. Many acres of cutover timberland south and west of the city were sold to immigrants coming into this area from Russia and the prairie provinces. After clearing the tree stumps and underbrush this highly productive ground was laid out in farms of smaller and larger acreages and planted to berries. Prevailing good prices

and much hard work have made some of the finest farms here. The boom in the late thirties, when the price of berries soared sky high, brought great wealth to many farmers.

Much help in the improvement of roads, the building of schools, and in providing a very fine hospital has come from the local government.

The Abbotsford Church was founded when the South Abbotsford congregation grew to be too large for its building and more room for worship and the Sunday school needed to be provided. The possibilities at the time were either to enlarge the present house of worship or to divide the congregation and build a second one. The plan of providing another building was adopted and the congregation proceeded in erecting the building. The group was then divided with one part remaining in the old building and the other making its home in the new building. The procedure followed by the South Abbotsford Church may well be a model for dealing with the situation where a congregation outgrows its building facilities. The new church was known as the Abbotsford Church and is located on the McCallum Road about one mile south of Abbotsford.

In January of 1950, even before the new building was entirely completed, the group of 197 members organized itself as the Abbotsford Mennonite Brethren Church. Rev. Henry H. Nickel was the first pastor and is the pastor at the present time.

The church today has 287 members. The Sunday school consists of 18 classes. Two extension stations are served by the church. Eight members have gone out as missionaries on the foreign mission field.

Abbotsford South

The South Abbotsford Church is located two miles south and one mile west of Abbotsford. It was organized in May of 1932 with 31 members present. Rev. Abram Rempel was the first pastor. In 1950, because the church had grown beyond the capacity of its church building, the congregation was divided to form two groups. One continued as the South Abbotsford Church, the other became the Abbotsford Church.



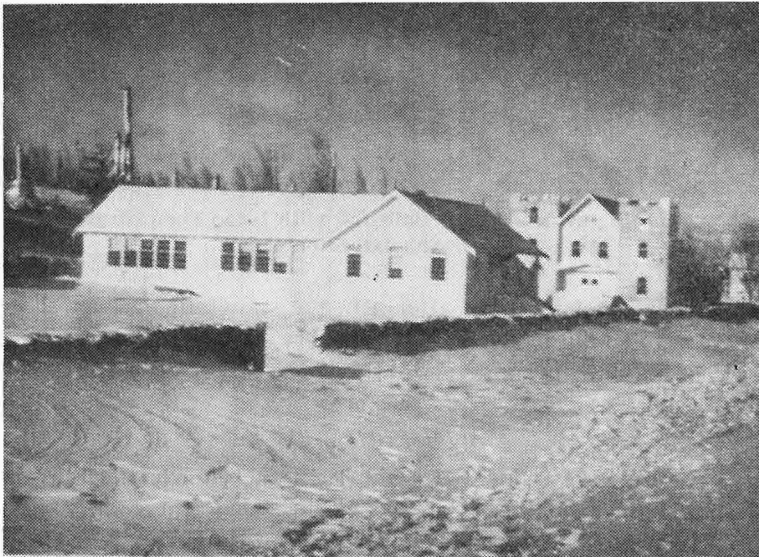
South Abbotsford Mennonite Brethren Church



Snow in British Columbia on January 6, 1950, as seen from the South Abbotsford Church after a snowstorm

The church today has a Sunday school of 22 classes. There are 355 members. Two extension stations are maintained by the church. Four missionaries from the church are active on foreign mission fields. Rev. J. J. Stobbe is the pastor.

The scenery in British Columbia with the mountain range north of Fraser River is beautiful in the summer, and it is equally beautiful in winter, when covered with ice and snow in the wake of a real snowstorm. Winter conditions may cause roads to be impassable and produce shortages of provisions and feed in entire communities and clearing the roads of snow must be seriously undertaken before traffic can be resumed.



South Abbotsford Church

The mild weather of British Columbia, summers not too hot and winters not too cold, has attracted many people. Usually there is enough rain during the growing season to allow the crops to mature and much more rain in the winter time.

January of 1950 furnished exceptional weather for the winter in British Columbia. There was wind and snow blocking the roads and causing great damage and many hardships. As usual, however, as soon as the warm ocean air comes in, the snow quickly disappears.



**Morning after a Heavy Snowfall with Isaac Toews from
South Abbotsford on Car**

On a quiet morning after a heavy snowfall, the wet snow is seen piled high everywhere. Every branch, post, or wire carries its load of snow.

Aldersgrove East

Aldersgrove is located a short distance north of Highway 1 and about six miles west of Clearbrook. Travelers coming from the United States enter at the Aldersgrove Customs Station, north of Bellingham, Washington.

The ground in this community consists of the cutover and burned over forest land which loggers leave. This has been cleared of the old tree stumps and proves to be highly productive in growing crops. The larger the stumps, the better the soil, for soil that will grow large trees will grow good crops. Here can be seen very fine farms and farm homes.

The East Aldersgrove Mennonite Brethren Church was organized in 1947 with 100 members. Rev. Gerhard P. Warrentin was the first pastor.

The church today has 207 members worshipping in a new church building. There are eleven Sunday school classes. Two

missionaries from the church are on the foreign mission field. Rev. Warkentin is the leader.



East Aldersgrove Mennonite Brethren Church

Arnold



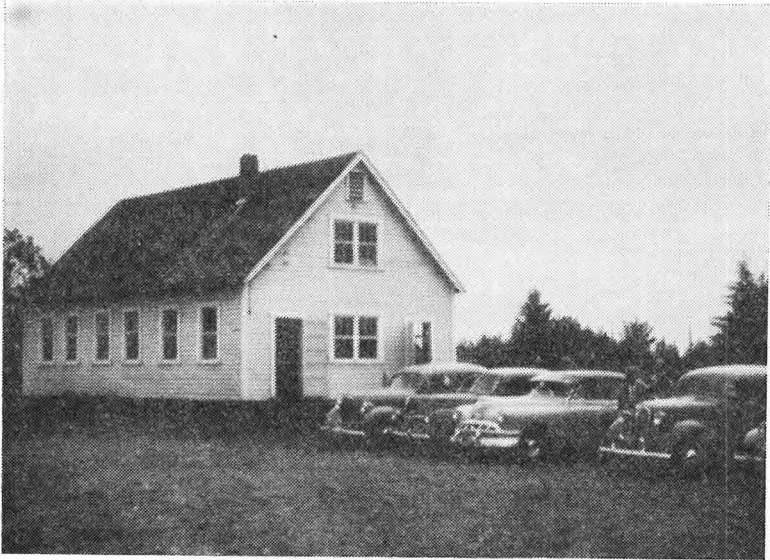
Arnold Mennonite Brethren Church

Arnold is a little hamlet in the Fraser River Valley close to the Yarrow Mountain, which rises to a height of 3000 feet and is covered with evergreen forests. It is on the south side of the British Electric Railroad.

Immigrants of the Mennonite Brethren faith settled in the Fraser Valley because of its mild climate and wonderful farming opportunities. A group of 72 organized the Arnold Mennonite Brethren Church on November 7, 1943. Rev. J. P. Braun was the first pastor.

The church today has 217 members. It has a Sunday school of 15 classes. Rev. Isaac P. Goertzen is the pastor.

Black Creek



Black Creek Mennonite Brethren Church

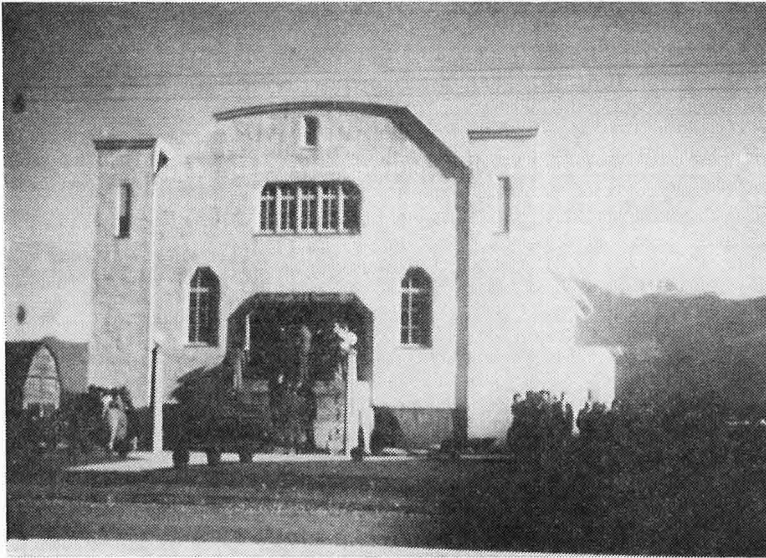
Black Creek is located on Vancouver Island. Vancouver Island is about 200 miles long and 50 to 60 miles wide and separated from the mainland of British Columbia by Georgia Strait and Johnstone Strait. A ferry makes daily connections between Vancouver on the mainland and Nanaimo on the island a distance of about 36 miles. Highway 1 runs along the east coast of the island from Victoria to Campbell, a distance of 109 miles.

Victoria, the capital of British Columbia with its beautiful Parliament Buildings, is located on Vancouver Island. The Island is a scenic wonderland with its own lakes, rivers, and waterfalls.

The Mennonite Brethren Church on Vancouver Island is located at Black Creek about 80 miles north of Nanaimo. This church was organized January 6, 1935, with 17 members. Rev Frank Friesen was the first pastor.

Today the church has 68 members. Its program includes a Sunday school of four classes and one extension station. One member of the church serves as missionary. Rev. John Goertz is the pastor and Deacon J. B. Falk the leader of the church.

Chilliwack



Chilliwack Mennonite Brethren Church

Chilliwack is the largest city in the Fraser Valley. Canada's Highway 1, upon leaving Chilliwack toward the east, soon winds its way up the Cascade Mountains and by way of Hope and Princeton and Penticton enters the beautiful Okanagan Valley.

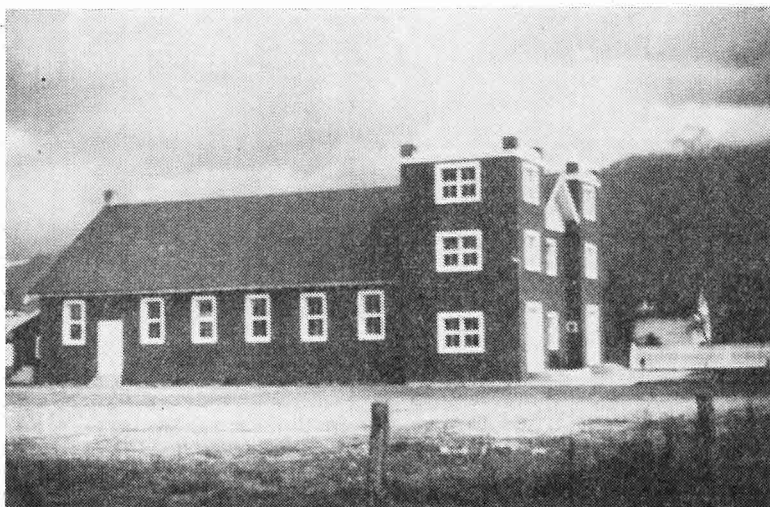
The Fraser River enters Fraser Valley at Hope about 35 miles northeast of Chilliwack. As it flows down the valley, it passes Harrison Hot Springs and Agassiz on its north banks and Chilliwack to the south. In the Agassiz area in earlier years the settlers moved on to higher ground to escape the danger of floods. A ferry is used in crossing the river at this point.

Chilliwack was not affected by the great flood in 1948 because the dikes protecting that part of the valley held. Since then the dikes have been reinforced guaranteeing the valley greater safety. On the south side of the river are some of the nicest farms while toward the north are the snow-covered mountains.

The Chilliwack Church was organized on May 15, 1947, with a group of 112 members. Rev. J. Bergen was the first pastor.

There are 253 members in the church at present. It has 13 Sunday school classes and maintains one extension station. The church building is in the east part of the town.

Chilliwack East



East Chilliwack Mennonite Brethren Church

The mountains surrounding the Fraser valley covered with trees and with snow most of the year make it a place of exceptional beauty. More and more Mennonites came and settled in this area, where fruit-growing and dairy farming are the main occupations of the farmer.

The East Chilliwack Mennonite Brethren Church is a rural church about five miles southeast of the city of Chilliwack. Most of the church members are farmers. The group was organized January 6, 1945, with 83 members. Rev. N. A. Rempel was the first pastor.

The church today has 236 members. It has a Sunday school of 19 classes. One extension station is taken care of by the church. Rev. G. Thielman is the pastor.

Clearbrook



Clearbrook Mennonite Brethren Church

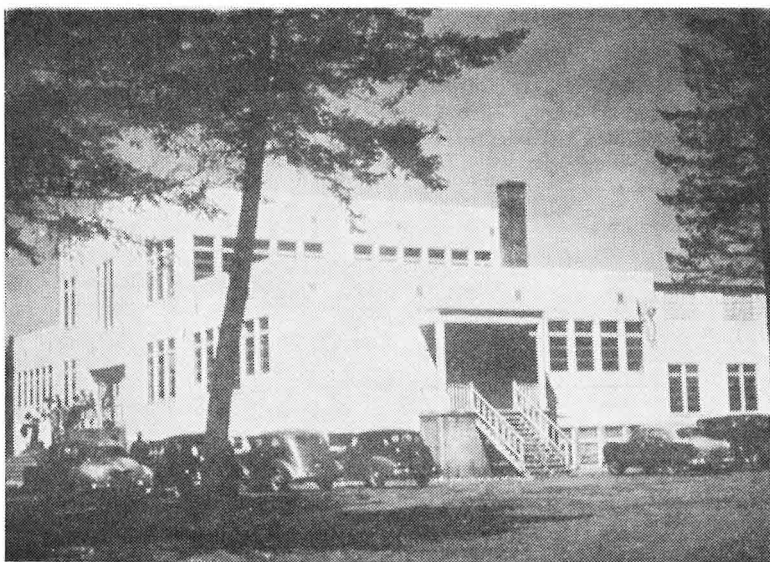
Clearbrook is located about three miles off of Highway 1, four miles from the United States-Canada border and about 40 miles east of Vancouver.

Farmers here have smaller and larger farms and are mostly berrygrowers. In season young and old are in the fields picking berries. It takes a strong back and a lot of will power

to make money as a berry-picker. The farmers in this area have prospered and the land prices are high.

In Clearbrook, which was formerly known as North Abbotsford, the Mennonite Brethren Church was organized in 1936 with 37 members. Rev. George Rempel was the first pastor.

The church today has 360 members. The Sunday school has 18 classes. Three extension projects are sponsored by the church. Three members are missionaries on the foreign mission field. Rev. Aaron A. Toews, who was the first pastor of the Namaka, Alberta, Church, is the present pastor. Rev. Toews is the author of two volumes of the *Mennonitische Maer-tyrer*.



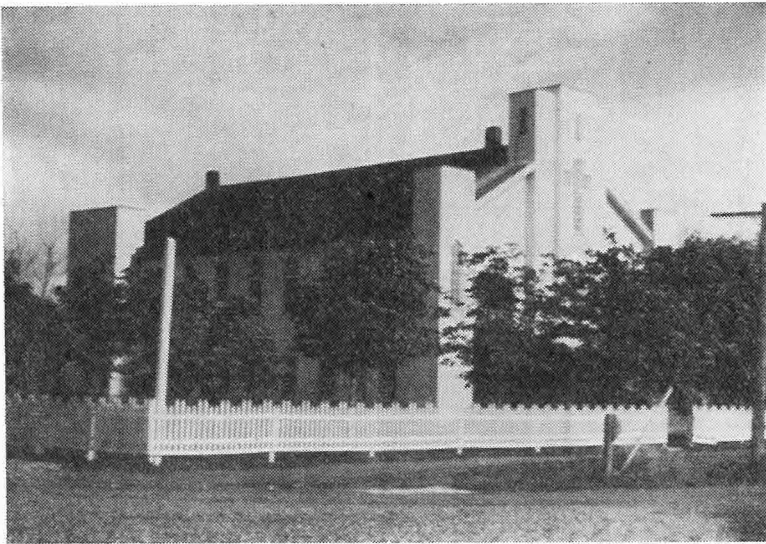
Mennonite Educational Institute

The Mennonite Educational Institute, located just north of the Clearbrook Church, is an educational program supported by the Mennonite Brethren Churches at Abbotsford, South Abbotsford, Clearbrook, and Aldersgrove. The building of the school is an up-to-date two-story structure with a large auditorium. The program of the Institute requires the study of

religion and the German language. The large meetings of the Canadian Conference in 1950 were held in the school's auditorium.

Greendale-Sardis

We are still in the midst of the wonders of the Fraser valley. On a clear day when looking to the south, the everlasting snow-covered Mt. Baker in the state of Washington can be seen. To the north are more mountains in their grandeur. The



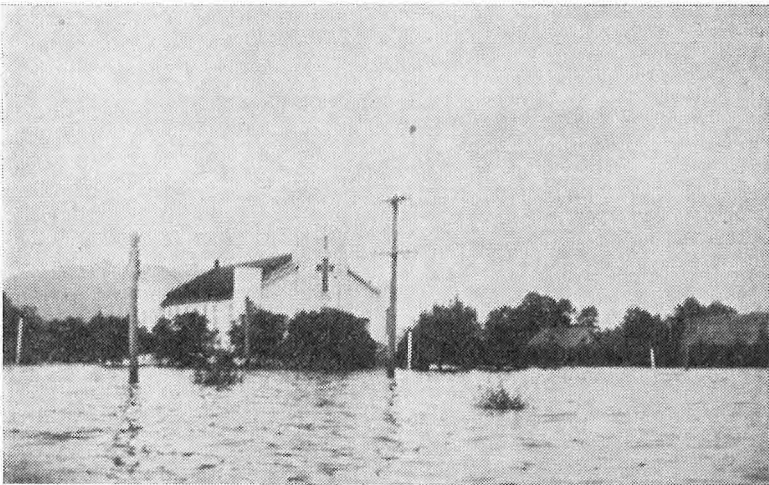
Greendale Mennonite Brethren Church

river enters the valley from the northeast, follows its course through the valley until it pours its waters into the mighty Pacific. Man has harnessed some of the mighty forces at work in this place.

The Greendale Mennonite Brethren Church, better known as the Sardis Church, was organized with 48 members in January of 1931 with Rev. H. G. Dueck as the first pastor.

Today the church has 340 members. The Sunday school has 27 classes. Three missionaries in the foreign field come from this church. Rev. H. J. Unger is the pastor.

In the latter part of June in 1948, the sudden thawing of the snows on the watershed of the Fraser River due to unusually warm weather increased the water flow and pressure to a point where the dikes, ordinarily holding the water in its channel, gave way. The efforts of officials and farmers to stop the leakages were fruitless and the water rushed onto the low-lying land flooding it to the river level, from 10 to 15 feet. Growing trees and brush through the years had weakened the dike system, so that they could not withstand the sudden onrush of the mighty waters.



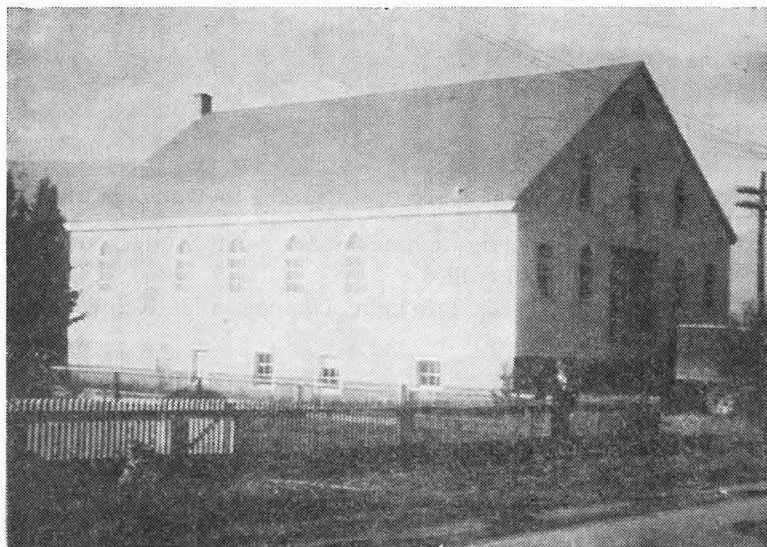
Greendale Church in the Flood Waters in June of 1948

When the waters receded, the broken dikes were repaired and the water pumped over the dam into the river. After about three months the land was sufficiently dry to enable farmers to return to the homes and begin the work of cleaning up and repair. The Canadian government helped those who lost and suffered in the flood with food and shelter and in the rebuilding of their homes and farms. Very little of the damage done by the waters can be seen today.

Kelowna

The Okanagan Valley, about 200 miles east of the Fraser Valley and separated from it by the Cascade Mountain Range, is the California of British Columbia. The valley is known for its wonderful apples and other fruit, including peaches, cherries, pears, and apricots.

Kelowna, a city of about 10,000 people, is located in this valley. Beautiful Lake Okanagan extends to the north and to the south. Highway 97, connecting with Highway 1 to the north and going south as far as the state of Oregon, passes through Kelowna.

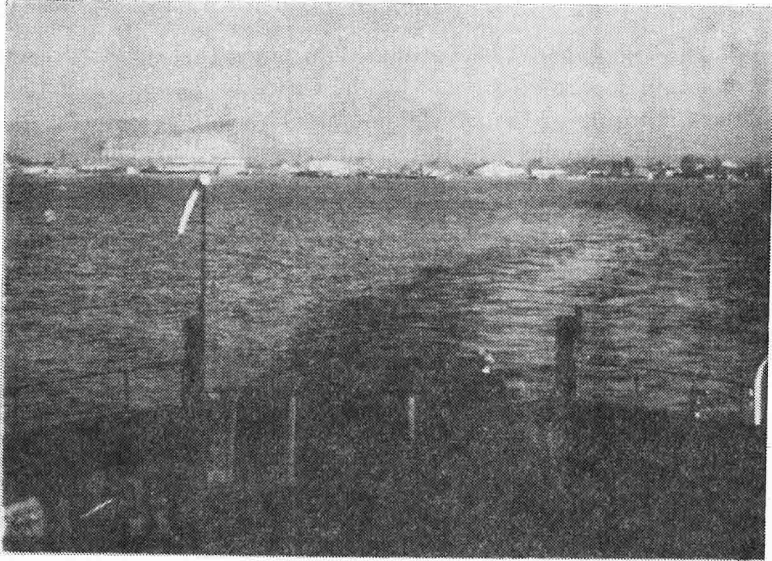


Kelowna Mennonite Brethren Church

On June 8, 1947, a group of 32 believers organized themselves as the Kelowna Mennonite Brethren Church. Rev. J. J. Unger was the first leader.

Today the church under the leadership of Rev J. J. Unger has 71 members. The Sunday school has six classes. The church building is located in the eastern part of the city.

Okanagan Lake is about 80 miles long and from one to three miles wide surrounded by mountains on both sides. The climate in the valley is warm in the summer time and mostly



Lake Okanagan from the Ferry Boat Crossing the Waters to Oliver

without rain making irrigation necessary. The winters are cold and with a heavy snowfall.

Highway 5 crosses the Lake Okanagan at Kelowna by ferry.

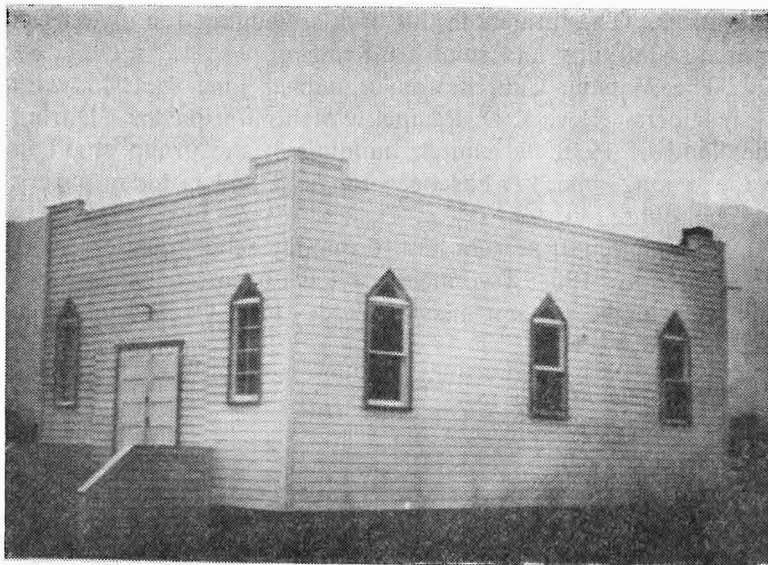
Oliver

The British Columbia Provincial Conference has a mission station at Oliver, which is located about 25 miles south of Penticton at the southern tip of Okanagan Lake. This region is also known for its delicious apples and other fruit.

The Mission Station at Oliver functioned as an independent church at one time. There remain about 17 members of the Mennonite Brethren faith at this time. The British Columbia Conference assists these by supplying workers.

Matsqui

The Matsqui Mennonite Brethren Church is located on the lowlands on the north side of the Fraser River, about eight miles north of Abbotsford and five miles southwest of Mission City. This part of the Fraser Valley was flooded when the levees gave way in 1948 resulting in much damage to homes



Oliver Mennonite Brethren Church



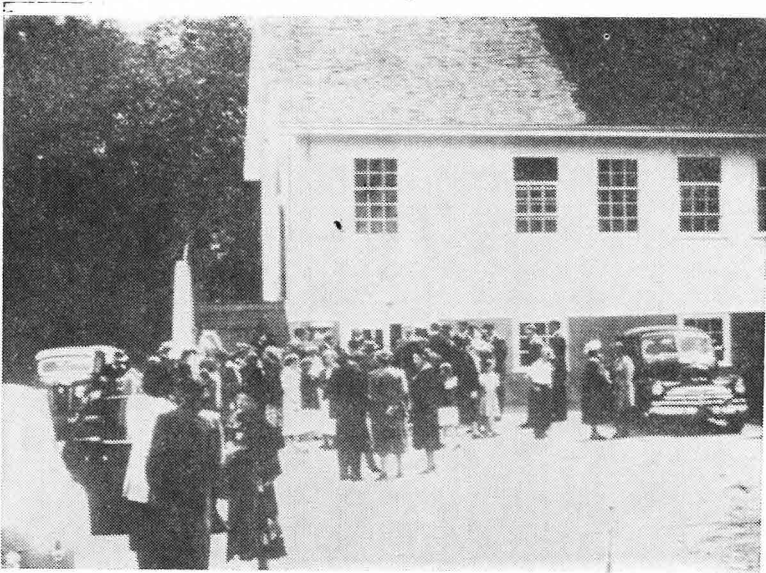
Matsqui Mennonite Brethren Church

and farms. The farmers in this area are engaged in diversified farming, dairying, and some fruit-raising.

The Matsqui Church was organized June 4, 1945, with 60 members. Rev. A. D. Rempel was the first pastor. During the flood of 1948 the church building of the group stood in water a long time. It has been repaired and is today a very fine building.

The church at present has 16 Sunday school classes. The membership is 185. Two members have been sent out as missionaries to the foreign mission field. Rev. G. A. Konrad is the pastor.

Strawberry Hill



Strawberry Hill Mennonite Brethren Church

Strawberry Hill is located a few miles from the city of Westminister on the northwest banks of the Fraser River which flows into the Pacific Ocean not far from here. Canadian Highway 1 and United States Highway 99 meet a few miles east of the Fraser River and enter Westminister and Vancouver as a four-lane highway.

Members of the Mennonite Brethren Church at Strawberry Hill live along the shores of Puget Sound and around Clover-

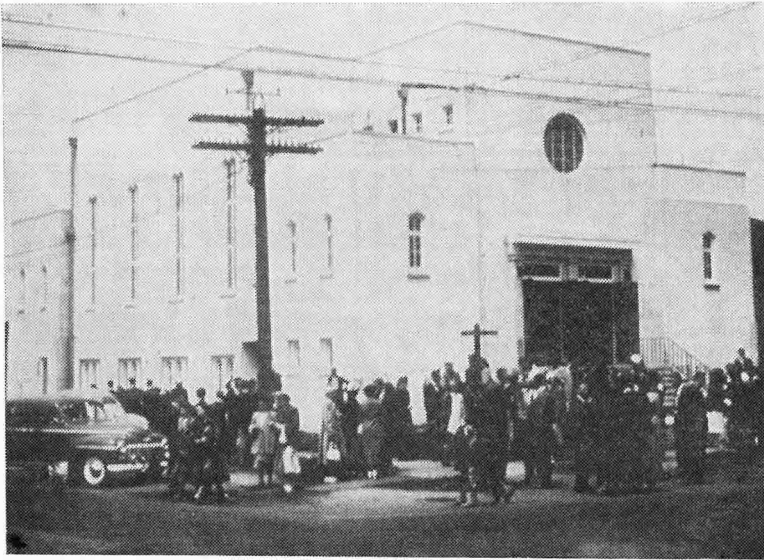
dale. Dairy farming and mixed farming furnish the means of livelihood.

The church was organized in 1944 with 40 members. Rev. G. Wiens was the first pastor.

Today the church has 110 members. The Sunday school is made up of eight classes. Two extension stations are supported by the group. Rev. Paul Wiebe is the pastor. The church building of the congregation is surrounded by lovely fir trees.

Vancouver

Vancouver, located on a peninsula on the west coast, is the largest city in British Columbia. Vancouver and the en-



Vancouver Mennonite Brethren Church

tire Pacific Coast from lower Mexico to Alaska owe their mild climate to the warm ocean currents of the Pacific.

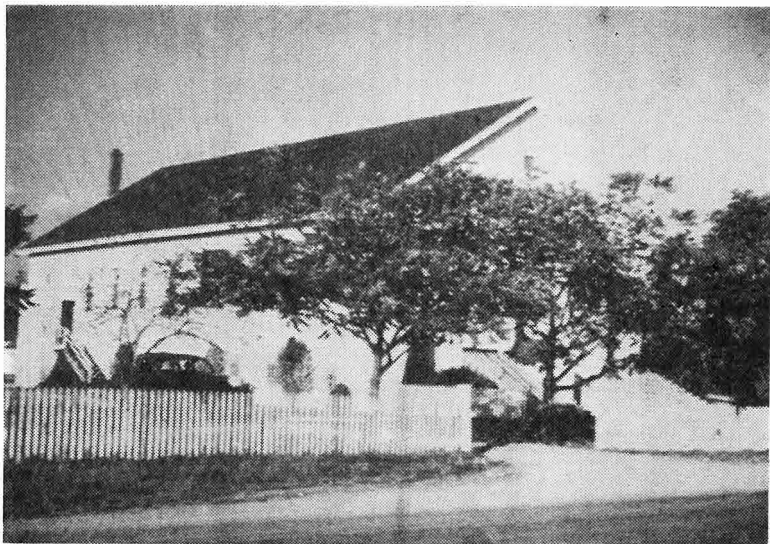
United States Highway 99, known as the Main Street of California, Oregon, and Washington crosses the International Boundary at Blaine, Washington, goes to New Westminster, crosses the steel bridge across the Fraser River and ends in Vancouver. Canada Highway 1, called the Grand View Highway, coming from eastern Canada, also ends in Vancouver.

Vancouver is a tourist center with many attractions in summer and winter. It is a good shopping center for the entire southwest British Columbia area.

In 1937 members of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Vancouver organized the church. There were then 73 members. Rev. John Peters was the first pastor.

Today the church has 654 members. The Sunday school program consists of 17 classes. The church is in charge of one extension station. Three members have gone as foreign missionaries. Rev. H. J. Klassen is the pastor. The church is located on West 49th Avenue.

Yarrow



Yarrow Mennonite Brethren Church

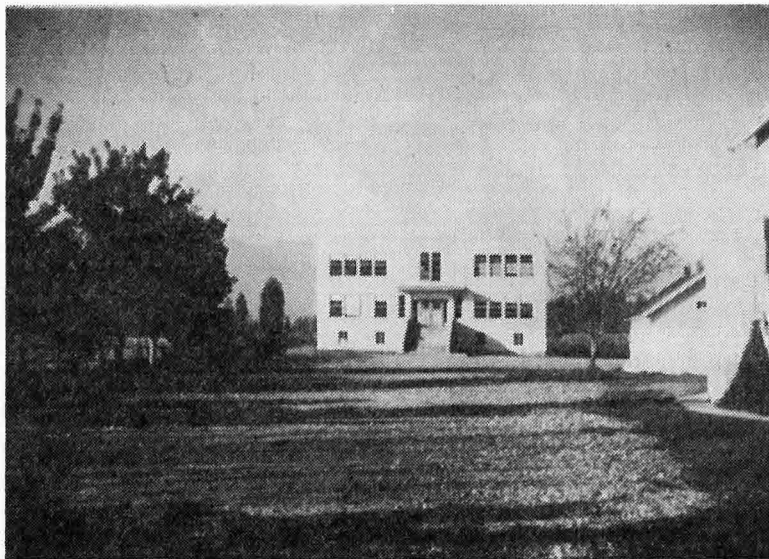
The Fraser River of the Fraser Valley carries the waters from the northern mountains fed by heavy winter snows which melt in the warm spring filling the river to flood stage in late May and early June. The land which is now the Fraser Valley was at one time a great inland lake into which the river emptied its waters. The Canadian government built huge dikes on the south side of the river and the Vadder Canal to hem in the Vadder River, thus diverting the mountain waters from the

lowlands in the valley. The lake was then drained and now furnishes the fertile farming soil of the valley. Old settlers tel of a great flood occasioned by a break in the dike causing much property oss. The dikes were, however, repaired and farm operations resumed.

Yarrow is a village without a railroad. The British Columbia Electric has a small station about a mile away which provides an outlet to the market for the fruit and dairy products produced here.

The Mennonite Brethren Church at Yarrow was organized February 3, 1929, with 96 members present. Rev. P. J. Dick was the first pastor.

The church today has 40 Sunday school classes and two Sunday schools as outstations. Seven married couples and one sister are on the foreign mission field. The membership is 783. Rev. H. Lenzman is the pastor.



Yarrow Bible School

The Yarrow Bible School was built on the church grounds in the late 1940's to offer the young people of the church systematic Bible instruction.

An effort was also made to build a Christian high school. When it was nearing completion, a financial crisis in the com-

munity and the entire area made it necessary to halt the project. The building was sold to the provincial government and was then completed and a public school educational program introduced.

In later years a second attempt and on a smaller scale has been made to establish a Christian high school by a Schulverein. This new building was erected in the southwest part of Yarrow and is in operation at the present time.



Rev. John A. Harder, Yarrow, British Columbia

Rev. John A. Harder, who for many years was the leader of the Yarrow Church and in the community, deserves much credit for the successes of the Yarrow settlement. His insight and love for the people, his achievement as a Bible scholar and leadership ability, his interest in building the Church and in religious education assured him the confidence of the people which enabled him to influence the wholesome development of the community. Rev. Harder is one of the leading brethren in the Canadian Conference and in the General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church. He is a member of the Board of Foreign Missions. He is also the Vice-Chairman of the Canadian Conference.

Chapter 8

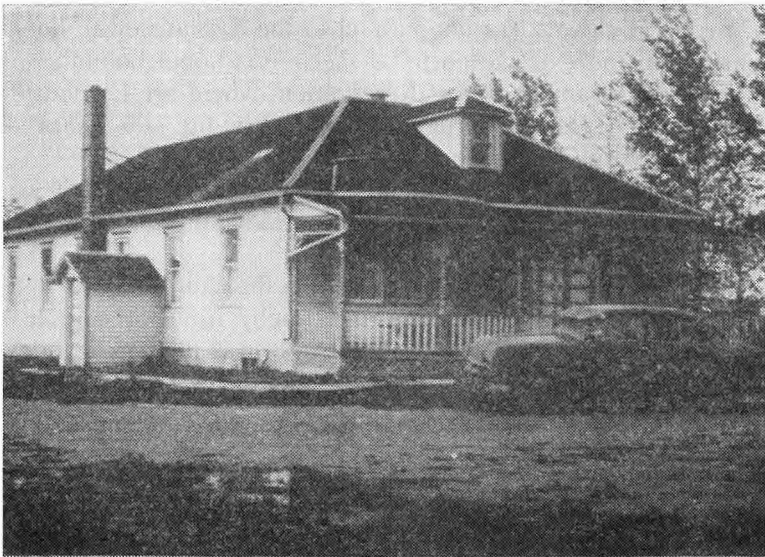
THE MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCHES OF THE MANITOBA PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE

Manitoba belongs to the Canadian Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church. There are 23 Mennonite Brethren Churches in Manitoba. These churches are organized as the Manitoba Provincial Conference.

Altona

The Altona Mennonite Brethren Church was organized in 1931 with 12 members. Rev. John Andres was the first pastor. The church was discontinued in the fall of 1951. Members of the church had affiliate membership in the Winkler and Gnadenthal Mennonite Brethren Churches.

Arnaud



Arnaud Mennonite Brethren Church

Arnaud is located on the vast farming lands on the banks of the Red River about 12 miles from the United States border

and six miles east of the Red River. This is an area of low flat land. During the big flood in 1950, when the Red River overflowed and inundated large stretches of farmlands with homes, the waters came within a short distance of the Arnaud district. Here can be seen large fields sown to wheat exclusively, which, in the summer time when ripe for the harvester, are a delight to see.

When in the latter part of 1920 immigrants from Russia settled in Canada, a number settled in the Arnaud area. In 1925 a group of 23 believers of the Mennonite Brethren faith organized as a church. Rev. Abram Peters was the first pastor.

The church at present has 58 members. There are three Sunday school classes. Rev. and Mrs. W. Baerg from the church are serving on the foreign field. Rev. I. I. Toews is the pastor.

Boissevain

Boissevain is located about 60 miles east of the Manitoba-Saskatchewan border where Highway 3 and Highway 10 intersect. Highway 10 runs parallel to the Saskatchewan boundary from the extreme north to the international boundary in the Turtle Mountain Forest Reservation, where are located the International Peace Gardens, commemorating 100 years of peace between Canada and the United States.

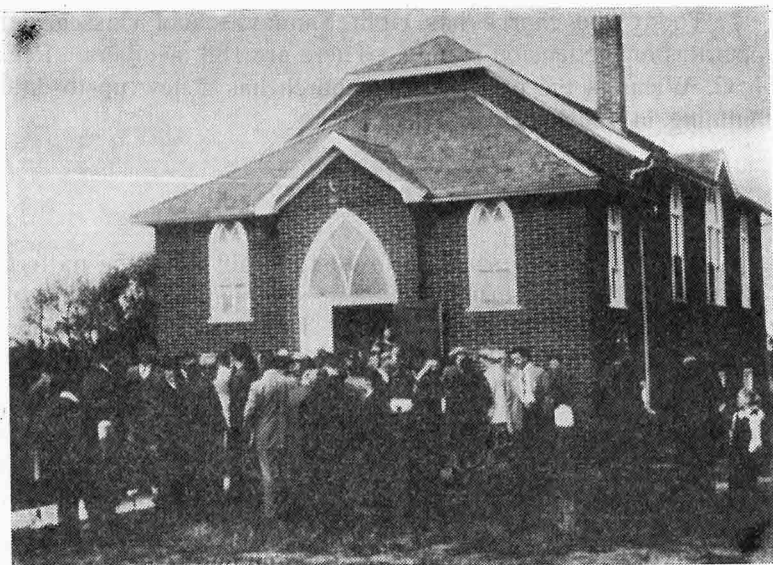
In 1928 the Boissevain Mennonite Brethren Church was organized with 35 members under the leadership of Rev. D. D. Derksen.

At present there are 87 members in the church. Five Sunday school classes are active. One family from the church is on the foreign mission field. Rev. Derksen is the pastor today.

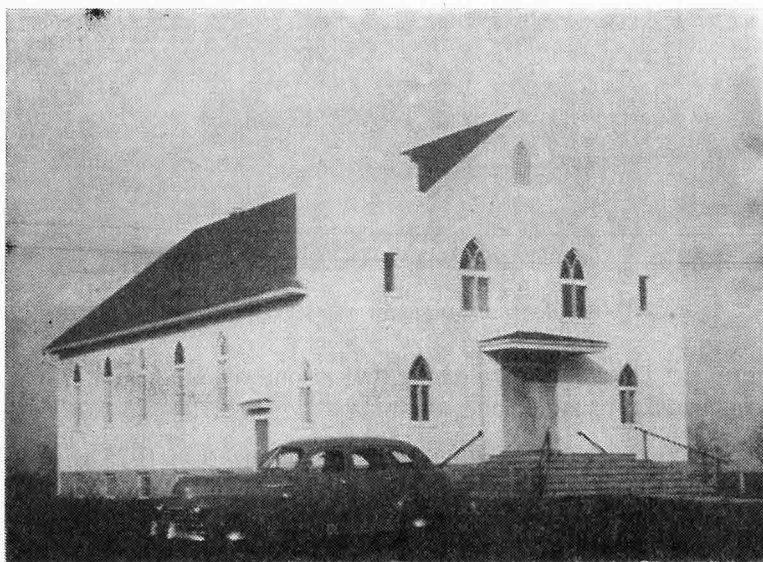
Elm Creek

The Elm Creek Mennonite Brethren Church is a rural church located in a farming area a few miles northwest of the town by that name. Highway 2 connects Elm Creek with Winnipeg to the east and runs west to the Saskatchewan border.

The Mennonite Brethren Church at Elm Creek was organized in 1929 by a group of 20 members. Rev. Heinrich J. Wiebe was the first pastor.



Boissevain Mennonite Brethren Church

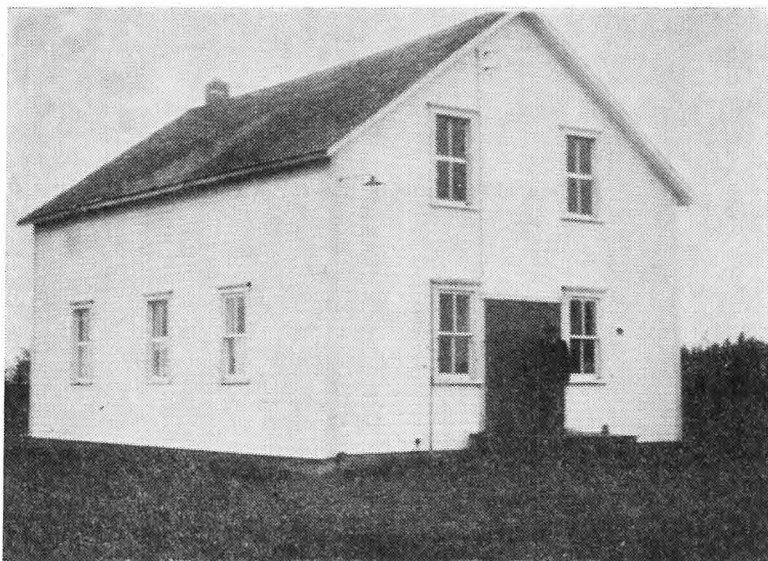


Elm Creek Mennonite Brethren Church

Today the church has eight Sunday school classes. It operates one extension station. There are 189 members. Rev. J. G. Wiens is the pastor. The church has a new up-to-date building in which it worships.

Gnadenthal

Gnadenthal is a small farm village built after the pattern of villages in the old country about seven miles southeast of Winkler and south of Plum Coulee. The farms are built along a long street, called Dorfstrasse, with the customary picket



Gnadenthal Mennonite Brethren Church

fences. The houses are of the two-in-one type, house and barn connected and under one roof.

The church at Gnadenthal was organized in 1925 with 24 members. Rev. Johannes Ratzlaff was the first pastor.

The church today has 34 members. There are two Sunday school classes. One missionary from the church is on the foreign mission field. Rev. H. P. Harder is the pastor.

Holmfeld



Holmfeld Mennonite Brethren Church

Holmfeld is a few miles off of Highway 3 in the southwest part of Manitoba.

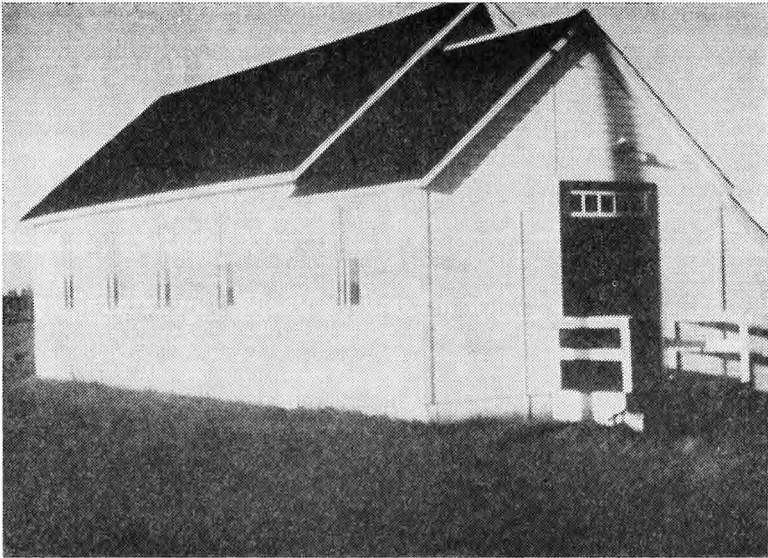
In 1928 settlers of the Mennonite Brethren faith at Holmfeld and at Lena organized as one church with 25 members. Rev. H. Unger was the first pastor of the group. In 1951 the two groups separated and became independent churches.

The Holmfeld Mennonite Brethren Church was organized with 26 members. Rev. P. F. Sawatzky was the first pastor.

The church today has 27 members. Rev. Peter P. Schultz is the pastor. The church building of the group is located 12 miles from the Canada-United States border.

Justice

About 10 miles north and five miles east of Brandon on the north side of the Assiniboine River is located the town of Justice. The rivers of Manitoba, especially the Assiniboine River and the Red River, played an important part in the early days in providing means of transportation to settlers and for this reason settlements were often located on the banks of rivers.



Justice Mennonite Brethren Church

The Justice Mennonite Brethren Church was organized January 13, 1930, with eight members. Rev. Jacob A. Loewen was the first pastor.

Today the church has five Sunday school classes. The membership is 51. Rev. Jacob J. Loewen is the pastor and leader.

Kronsgart

The Kronsgart Church is located about 12 miles north and east of Winkler. It was organized in 1896 with 13 members. The first pastor was Rev. Jacob Heide.

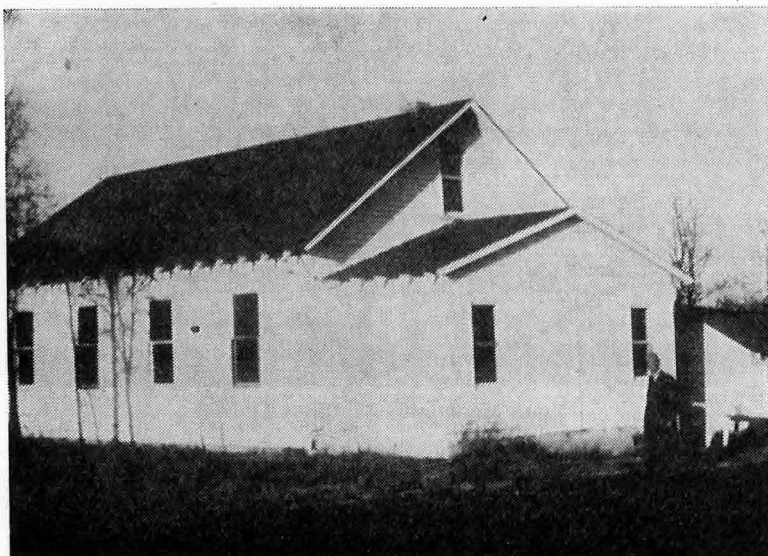
At the present time the church has ten Sunday school classes. One extension station is supplied by the church. One member from the church is a missionary on the foreign mission field. The present membership is 176. Rev. John J. Neufeld is the pastor.

La Salle

When the Mennonites came from Russia in 1923 to 1930 and again after World War II, many came to Winnipeg, which



Kronsart Mennonite Brethren Church



La Salle Mennonite Brethren Church

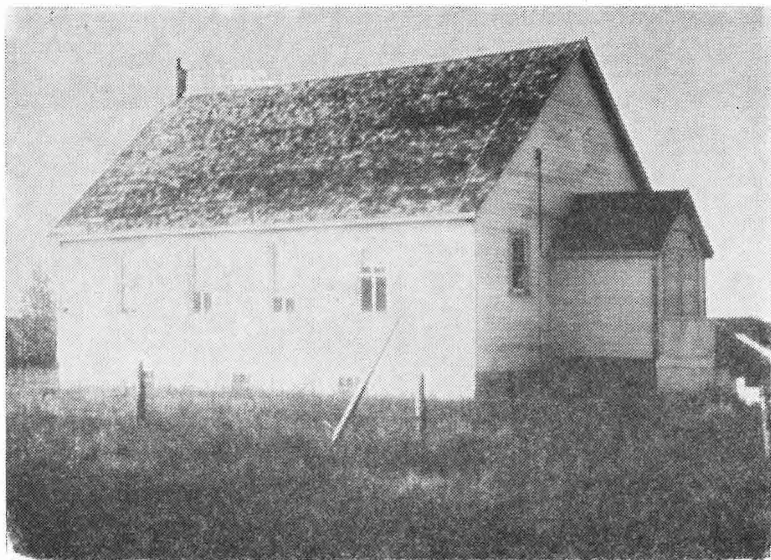
is the largest city and center in Manitoba. Here they were received by those who were at home in Canada for many years and given places in their homes until they were able to establish their own.

La Salle is close to Osborne, about 20 miles southwest of Winnipeg and ten miles west of the Red River, in a fertile and level farming district. The flood waters of the Red River during the flood of 1950 extended into this area about ten miles giving it the appearance of a huge inland lake.

The La Salle Mennonite Brethren Church was organized in 1926 with 35 members. Rev. Jacob Penner was the first pastor.

The church today has six Sunday school classes and a membership of 58. Rev. Jacob Pauls is the leader.

Lena



Lena Mennonite Brethren Church

As more and more Mennonite immigrants came to Manitoba, the search for new homes extended farther and farther west.

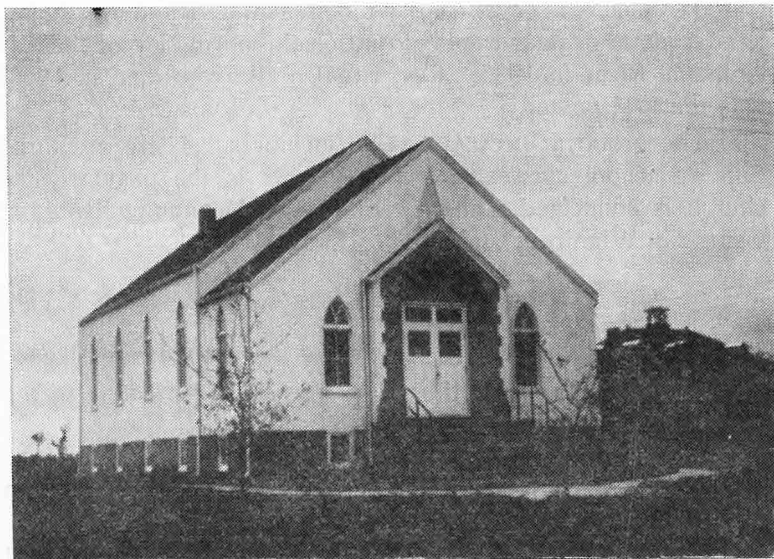
The small village of Lena is located about 40 miles south and 15 miles east of Brandon, the second largest city in Mani-

toba, and about six miles from the Canada-United States border.

The settlers at Lena and the settlers at Holmfield, a neighboring community, joined in organizing the church at Lena in March of 1928 as a group of 25 believers under the leadership of Rev. H. Unger. The Lena group became a separate congregation when the Holmfield group organized as an independent church in 1951.

The church at present has 51 members. The Sunday school is made up of six classes. Rev. J. F. Poetker is the pastor.

Manitou



Manitou Mennonite Brethren Church

On Highway 3 and about 22 miles west of Winkler is Manitou in an area where the land is a little more rolling and the trees along the streams add to the beauty of the scenery.

The Mennonite Brethren Church at this place was organized in 1927 with 50 members. Rev. Anton Berg was the first pastor.

The present membership of the church is 70. There are six Sunday school classes. Rev. John Wiebe is the pastor.

The Mennonite Brethren Conference came into possession of 160 acres of the finest wheat-growing land in this community, when Brother and Sister John Dick were killed in an accident on Highway 2 near Wolf Point, Montana, having left their home in Clearbrook, British Columbia, to look after their farm land in Manitoba. The Dicks had no children and had willed their property in Manitoba to the mission work of the Mennonite Brethren Conference. The rent derived from the farm now goes to the support of foreign missions. The property arrangements of the brother and sister may well be a pattern for others without children who have property to leave.

Marquette

Ten members organized as the Mennonite Brethren Church at Marquette or near Poplar Point on the north side of the Assiniboine River in 1935. Rev. Frank Falk, who died in 1953, was the first pastor.

The group at present has 20 members. There are three Sunday school classes. Rev. I. Penner is the pastor. The church is connected with the Elmwood Mennonite Brethren Church in Winnipeg.

Morden

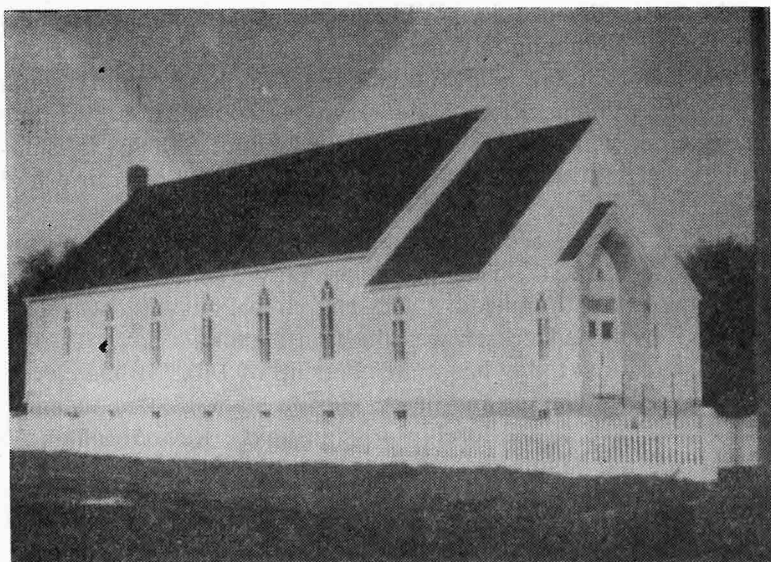
Morden is the oldest settlement of members of the Mennonite Brethren people in Manitoba. It is located on Highway 3 about seven miles west of Winkler.

The Mennonite Brethren Church at Morden was organized with 18 members in 1929. Rev. D. D. Toews and Rev. John Andres were the pastors and leaders.

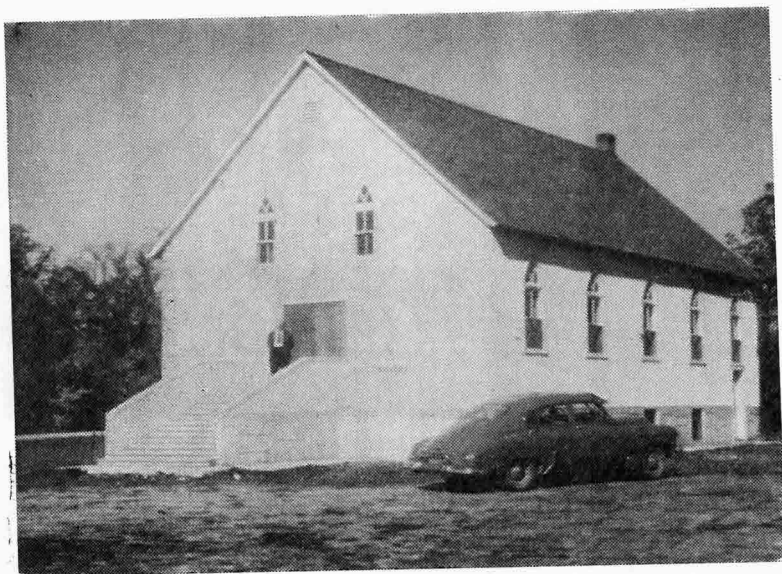
Today the church has 180 members. The Sunday school program is made up of 10 classes. The church is responsible for one extension station. Three members are active as missionaries on the foreign mission field and another couple will leave for the field in 1954. Rev. F. H. Friesen is the pastor.

Newton Siding

Mennonite settlers coming to Canada usually came with few or no means. Their credit, however, was good, for Mennonites had a reputation in Canada as an honest, God-fearing,



Morden Mennonite Brethren Church



Newton Siding Mennonite Brethren Church

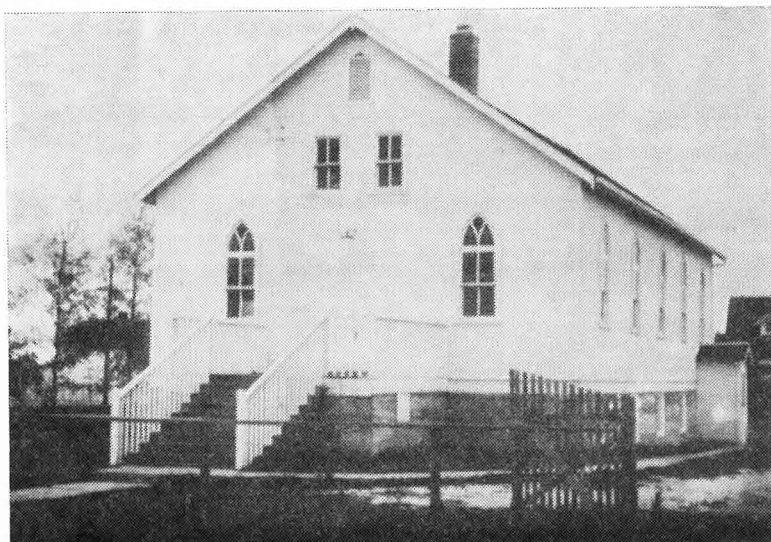
and trustworthy people. With the use of credit many settlers made their beginning in Canada.

Newton Siding is a little village on the level country south of the Assiniboine River about 15 miles southeast of Portage La Prairie, which has a population of about 8,000. It is located on Highway 1 passing through Portage La Prairie and Winnipeg to the east and through Brandon to the west.

The Newton Siding Mennonite Brethren Church was organized in 1928, the year in which many Mennonite Brethren Churches were organized. The church began with 48 members. Rev. J. A. Derksen was the first pastor.

The church today has a membership of 140. It has eleven Sunday school classes and one extension station. One member is a missionary on the foreign mission field. Rev. Abraham A. Loewen is the pastor.

Niverville



Niverville Mennonite Brethren Church

The Niverville area is located east of the Red River. It is a farming community, having a heavy black soil and ample rainfall for raising potatoes, sugar beets, and other vegetables.

Wheat is the main grain crop. Chicken-raising has become an important occupation in this community.

The town of Niverville is located about 20 miles south of Winnipeg and about 20 miles northwest of Steinbach on Highway 59 running south of Winnipeg to the Canada-United States border. The waters of Red River came close to the town during the flood of 1950.

The Mennonite Brethren Church was organized in 1929 with 30 members. Rev. Abram Janzen was the first pastor.

Today the church has 137 members. There are five Sunday school classes. One member is a missionary on the foreign mission field. Rev. William W. Dyck is the pastor.

Sperling

About 50 miles southeast of Winnipeg on Highway 3 is a little church near the town of Sperling. In this church the



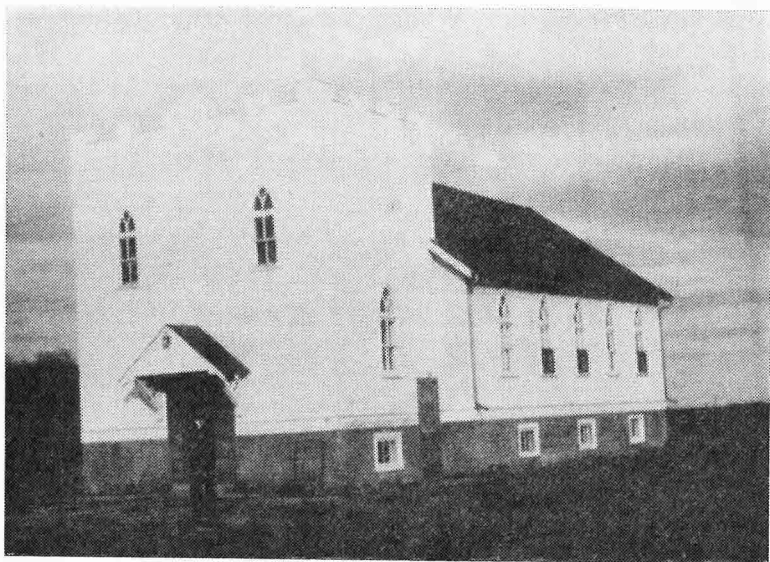
Sperling Mennonite Brethren Church

Mennonite Brethren group worshipped together with a group of General Conference Mennonites. Beginning in May, 1928, the group met in different homes until the church was organized in 1932 with 20 members. Rev. John Jacob Martens of the

General Conference and Rev. Abr. Olfert were the ministers. Both of these brethren have gone to their reward.

The church today has 22 members. There are two Sunday school classes. Rev. Gerh. Neufeld, a former leader, has left the community. Rev. Johann Martens is the assistant leader. The Mennonite Brethren of the Sperling group have joined the Winkler Mennonite Brethren Church since January, 1954.

Springstein



Springstein Mennonite Brethren Church

The church at Springstein is about 20 miles south and west of Winnipeg between Oak Bluff and Fannystelle. It is located in a fine grain-farming section.

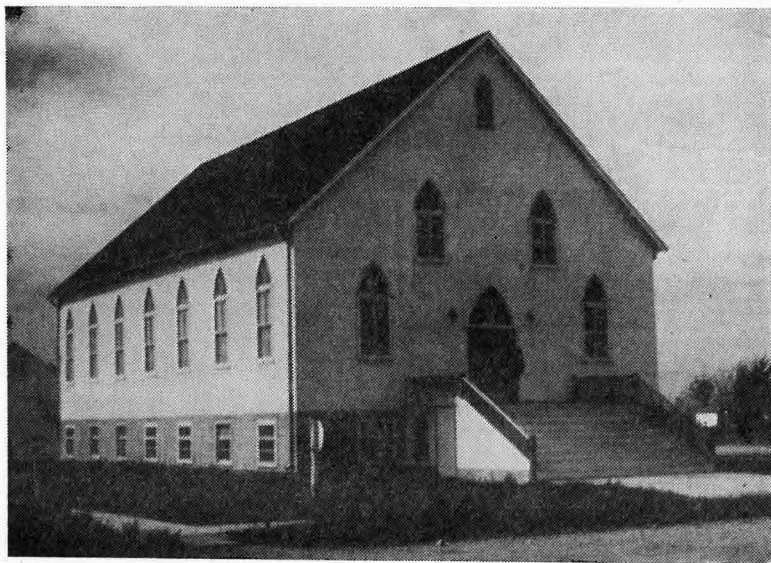
Thirty-eight members were organized as the Springstein Mennonite Brethren Church in 1933. Rev. John Kliever was the first pastor.

The church today has five Sunday school classes. One member is a missionary on the foreign mission field. The membership is 37. Rev. P. P. Dueck is the pastor.

Steinbach

The Mennonite immigrants from Europe in many instances worked a year for the benefactors who had made it possible for them to come to Canada. After that they would go out on their own. In making a new start many settled in the established communities and others went into new territories. They worked hard to earn money to repay the railroad and steamship companies who advanced them credit in coming to Canada.

Steinbach, a community of German-speaking people, is located about 40 miles southeast of Winnipeg on Highway 12. As a village Steinbach was laid out after the village-pattern



Steinbach Mennonite Brethren Church

in the old country. Today Steinbach is a thriving town with many business houses.

The Mennonite Brethren group at Steinbach organized as a church January 3, 1927, with 45 members. Rev. Gerhard A. Unruh was the first pastor.

The church at present has 293 members. It has 12 Sunday school classes. Two members serve as missionaries on the foreign mission field. Rev. Heinrich A. Regier is the pastor.

Winnipeg North End

Early in the history of Manitoba, Fort Garry was built at the junction of the Assiniboine River and the Red River, known as the Fork. Between 1870 and 1873 the area around Fort Garry came to be known as Winnipeg, an Indian name meaning "dirty water." In 1871 Winnipeg was a village of 19 homes and less than 500 people. The nearest railroad was 400 miles away, although the Canadian Pacific Railroad had surveyed several routes from Lake Superior and a few years later built the first railroad to Winnipeg. The population of Winnipeg in 1873 was 1,869. The estimated population in 1949 was 320,000.



Winnipeg North End Mennonite Brethren Church

Travel from Montreal in Quebec to Winnipeg today is a matter of a few hours. Two hundred years ago Sieur de la Verendrye, probably the first white man to set foot in this region, took eleven years to travel this distance.

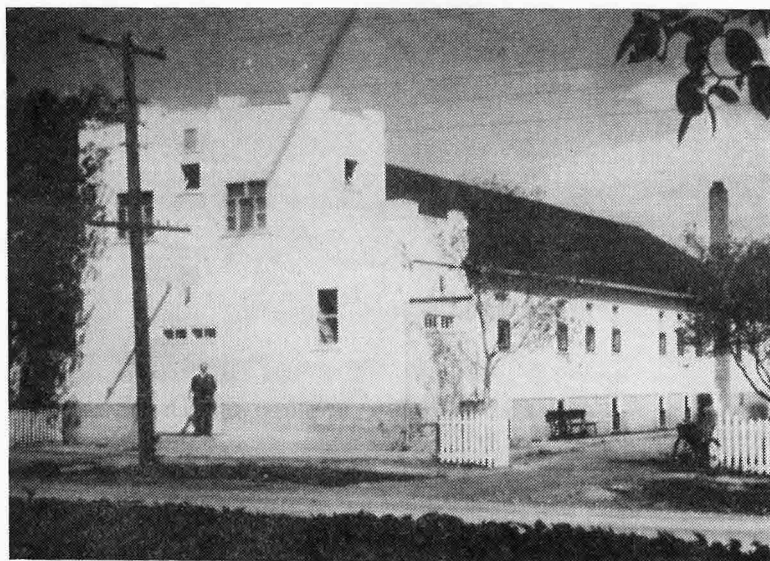
Winnipeg is the capital of Manitoba with the Parliament Buildings and a fine university located in it. The transportation of people and goods is done largely by the Canadian Pacific Railroad and other railroads.

Mennonites who had settled in Manitoba soon found their way into this fast-growing city and today many have their own business establishments here.

In 1913 the North End Mennonite Brethren Church was organized in Winnipeg with 22 members. Rev. William Bestvater was the first pastor. Rev. C. N. Hiebert served as pastor of this church many years.

Today the church has 15 Sunday school classes and one extension station. One missionary from the church is on the mission field in India. The membership is 321. Rev. Henry Regier is the leader. The church building of the congregation is located at 255 Midwinter Avenue.

Winnipeg North Kildonan



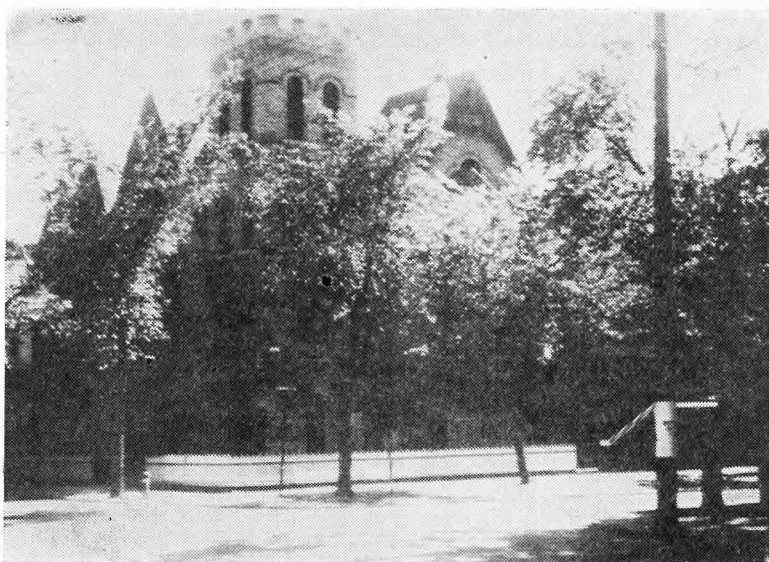
North Kildonan Mennonite Brethren Church

Immigrants continued to come to Manitoba and to settle in Winnipeg. Among them were men such as Rev. A. H. Unruh and others, whose coming and whose work in the churches and in the conferences meant an upsurge in the growth of the churches in Manitoba.

In 1928 a group of 30, who had been members of the North End Church, officially organized as the North Kildonan Church under the leadership of Rev. Gerhard Klassen.

Today the church has 402 members. There are 16 Sunday school classes. One extension station is maintained. From the church one member has gone to the foreign mission field. Rev. W. Falk is the pastor and leader. The address of Rev. Falk is 163 Irving Place in Winnipeg.

Winnipeg South End



South End Mennonite Brethren Church

In a city of 300,000 the distance from one end to the other is many miles. Because a number of people had their homes in the south part of the city and others were constantly moving in, it became essential to have a church here.

In 1936 the South End Mennonite Church was organized. The church began with 90 members under the leadership of Rev. P. Kornelsen.

The church at present has a membership of 420. The Sunday school program consists of 15 classes. Two missionaries from the church are on the foreign mission field. Rev. J. P. Neufeld is the pastor. The present beautiful church build-

ing with hardwood pews was purchased from a church group, no longer able to operate it, at a very reasonable price.

Winnipeg Mennonite Brethren Bible College



Winnipeg Mennonite Brethren Bible College

The Mennonite Brethren Bible College, located at 77 Kelvin Street, is owned and operated by the Canadian Mennonite Brethren Conference. The program of the school includes a Christian high school and a dormitory for housing and dining students. The school has been a real blessing to the Canadian and the General Conferences.

The main buildings and grounds were purchased in 1947 from the city of Winnipeg, which had used the property for public school purposes until the public school was moved to another location.

Dr. H. H. Janzen is the president of the school working with such men as J. Quiring, Is. Redekop, H. Regier, H. P. Toews, A. H. Unruh, J. A. Toews, and D. Ewert as faculty members. Students from all parts of Canada and from other places come here to study.

The Mennonite Brethren Bible College receives 25 per cent of the income of the Educational Endowment Fund of the Mennonite Brethren Conference.



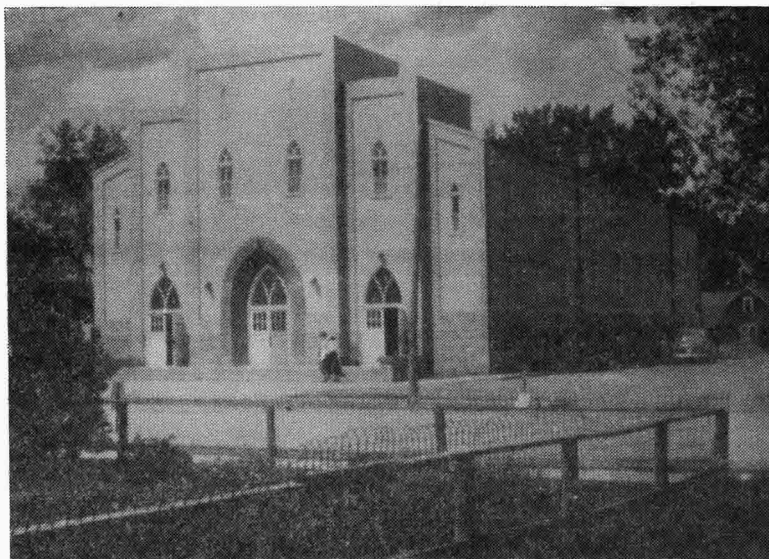
Dr. A. H. Unruh, Winnipeg, Manitoba

Dr. A. H. Unruh is perhaps the most widely known teacher, preacher, Bible expositor, and public speaker in Mennonite Brethren circles both in Canada and the United States. He has spent most of his years as a teacher, teaching in the old country and in Canada. At present he is a teacher in the Mennonite Brethren Bible College. The teaching and preaching of Brother Unruh is always an inspiration to young and old. His well-balanced Christian life and his character are tools in the hand of God in building the church of Jesus Christ.

Winkler

When the Mennonites in the 1870's came to North America, the province of Manitoba, just as various states of the United States, invited the immigrants to settle the virgin lands within its boundaries. In Manitoba was located the vast farming area on both sides of the Red River with very few settlers. Agents representing this tract of ground succeeded in moving some of the early Mennonites into this part of the province.

A group of six believers gathered in 1886 and organized themselves as the Winkler Mennonite Brethren Church under



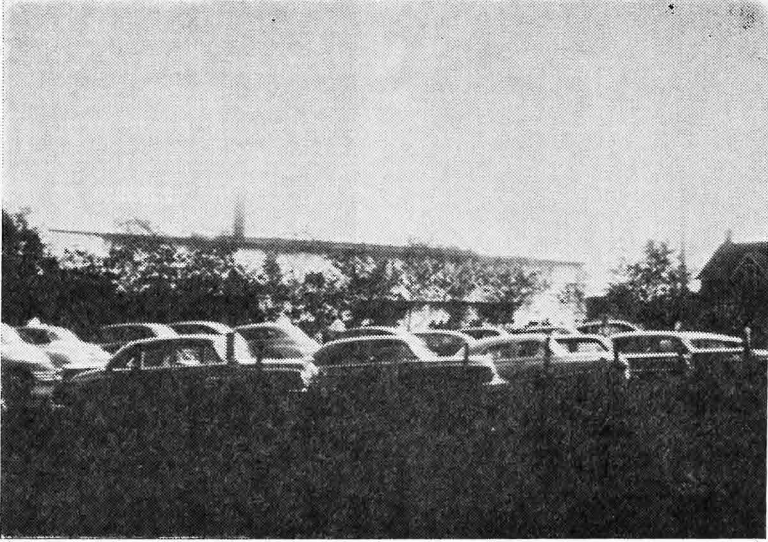
Winkler Mennonite Brethren Church

the leadership of Rev. David Dick, who was well known in the Conference in the United States. Rev. Heinrich Warkentin was for many years the leader of the Winkler Church. Rev. H. S. Voth from Mountain Lake, who married the oldest daughter of Rev. Warkentin and who was a member of the Board of Foreign Missions, was the leader of the church many years.

The church today has a membership of 309. It has a Sunday school of 26 classes and two extension stations. Seven members of the church are serving on foreign mission fields. Rev. G. D. Pries is the leader. Rev. Pries is also the Treasurer of the Canadian Conference on the Board of Foreign Missions and a member of the Board of Trustees of the Conference.

The convention of the General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church was entertained by the Winkler and surrounding churches in 1951 in Winkler. The conference sessions were held in the magnificent church building of the con-

gregation. The large Sunday meetings were conducted in the Winkler Skating Arena.



Sunday Services at the Winkler Skating Arena

Chapter 9

THE MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCHES OF THE ONTARIO PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE

Ontario belongs to the Canadian Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church. It has seven churches. These are organized as the Ontario Provincial Conference.

The province of Ontario with its many lakes and waterways, its highways and farms, which produce every kind of grain, fruit, and livestock, is a wonderland. Here are pulp factories, automobile factories, and many other kind of factories. Here farmers grow fresh fruits of every variety on the wide stretch of farmland on the south shore of Lake Ontario up to Hamilton. The wonderful Queen Elizabeth Way, a four lane highway, runs from Toronto to the Niagara Falls and to Buffalo, New York.

The west boundary of Ontario is the great Lake Huron and Detroit, the automobile center, to the south is the great Lake Erie, and to the east is the Niagara River and the great Lake Ontario.

Hespeler

Hespeler is a station near Kitchener. The Mennonite Brethren Church does not own its own building here, but rents a hall in town where services are conducted.

According to the Yearbook of the Canadian Mennonite Brethren Conference there are 16 members in the church. Rev. J. Schoenke is the assistant and present leader of the group.

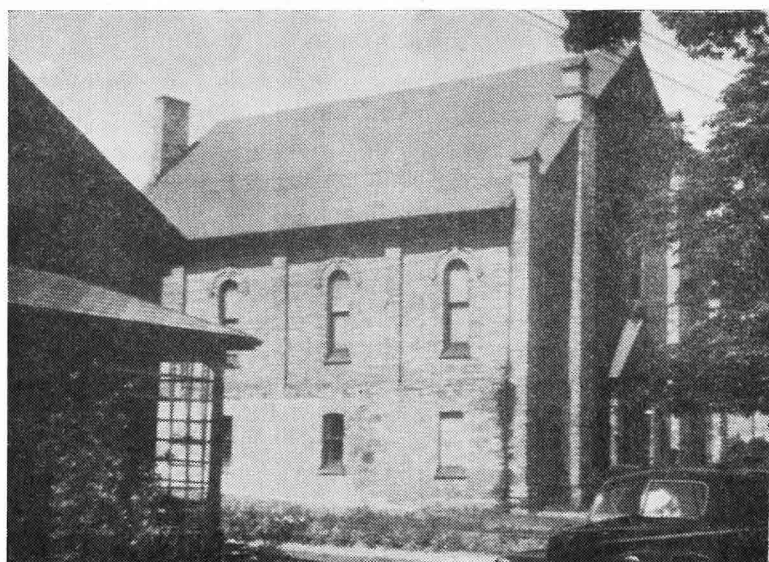
Kitchener

Kitchener is one of the older and larger cities in Ontario, located about 36 miles northwest of Hamilton on the shores of Lake Ontario. Waterloo is a suburb of Kitchener.

The city of Kitchener is noted for its fresh fruits in the Market Place, which is open every day during the summer. Many factories are located here including the oldest woolen mills in Canada, rubber factories, and shoe factories. Members of the Mennonite Brethren Churches have found employment in the factories of the city.



Hespeler Mennonite Brethren Church



Former Kitchener Mennonite Brethren Church

The Kitchener Mennonite Brethren Church was organized April 26, 1925, with 18 members present. Rev. Jacob Friesen was the first pastor and continued in that office until January 10, 1932.

The church today has 12 Sunday school classes. One couple will leave for Africa in September as teacher missionaries. Rev. I. T. Evert is the interim minister until September 1, 1954. Rev. J. J. Toews, at present the pastor of the Buhler Mennonite Brethren Church in Kansas will be pastor beginning in September.

Leamington



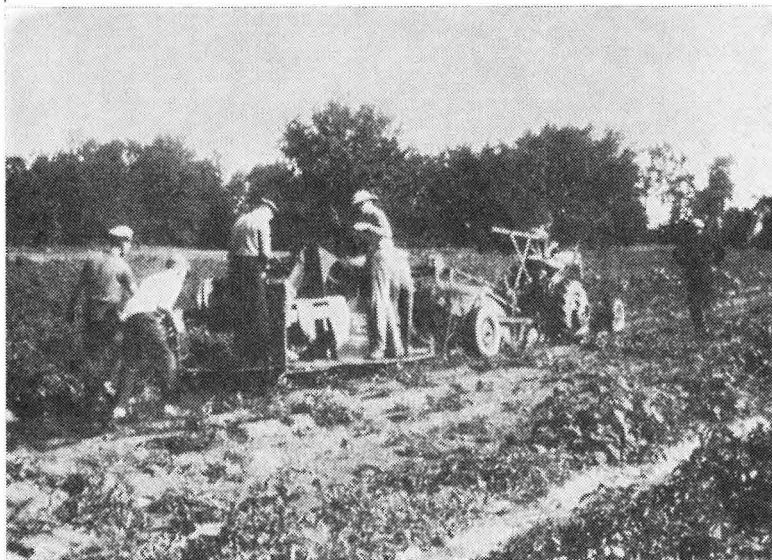
Leamington Mennonite Brethren Church

Windsor is located on the east side of the Detroit River, which is the boundary between Ontario and the state of Michigan. Travel between Windsor and Detroit of the United States side of the river, the larger of the two cities, is done by ferry, tunnel road, or by the bridge road. Leamington is located 33 miles southeast of Windsor and on Highway 3, which follows the north shore of Lake Erie to the Niagara Falls. Pelee Island, an island about eight miles long and three miles wide, is in Lake Erie 18 miles due south.

Pelee Island was at one time the home of a number of Mennonite Brethren Church members, who immigrated in the 1920's and later. The difficulties in transportation to the mainland, which was by boat in summer and by cars and trucks over the ice when the water in the lake was frozen, caused the settler to move. In visiting the one family still living on the island in behalf of the Endowment Fund, the solicitor made the trip by plane, which made the visit a matter of two hours, whereas by boat it would have required two days.

The Mennonite Brethren Church at Leamington was organized with 63 members in 1932. Rev. I. H. Thiessen was the first pastor.

The church today has 182 members. There are eight Sunday school classes. Rev. David Derksen is the pastor.



Harvesting the Potato Crop in the Leamington Community

Leamington is known for its parks and beaches which are excellent for bathing and fishing. Diversified farming is practiced on the farmlands of this area. Early cucumbers, tomatoes, and other vegetables are grown in hothouses. Berries, cherries, and many other fruits are grown. Potatoes have come to be an important crop. These are harvested with a machine, which digs, sorts, and sacks the potatoes in one

operation, pulled by a tractor. Grains grown in this area include wheat, oats, barley, and corn. An important outlet for the products produced in Leamington are the cities of Windsor and Detroit.

New Hamburg

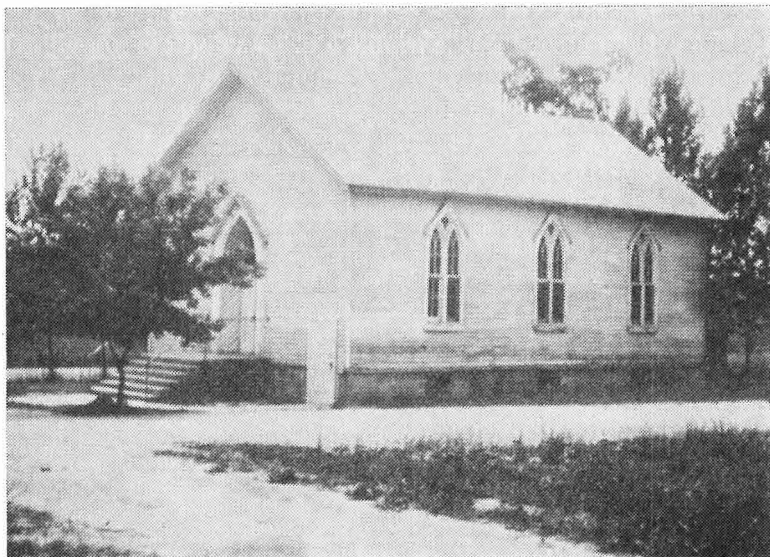


New Hamburg Mennonite Brethren Church

A small group of the Mennonite Brethren faith in New Hamburg rented a hall in the upper room of a building in this city. Here they gathered for services until 1953 when the group was dissolved and the members affiliated with the Kitchener Mennonite Brethren Church.

Port Rowan

When members of the Mennonite Brethren Church settled in eastern Canada a group located at Port Rowan in Ontario on Long Point Bay of Lake Erie about 100 miles west of the Niagara Falls and of Buffalo, New York. Four miles north and west of Port Rowan the Mennonite Brethren Church is located.



Port Rowan Mennonite Brethren Church

A group of 16 members in 1928 organized the Church in New Hamburg. Rev. Dietrich Derksen was the first pastor.

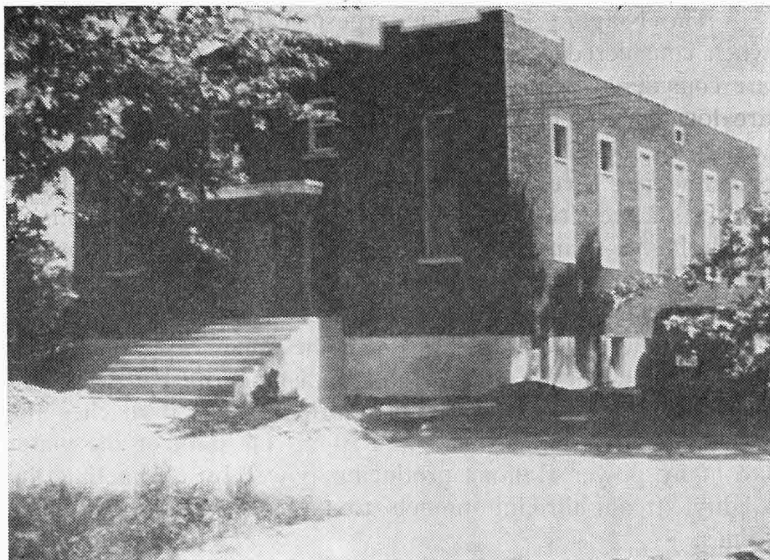
Today the church has 113 members. There are eight Sunday school classes. One missionary from the church is on the foreign mission field. Rev. Jacob A. Penner is the pastor.

St. Catharines

The city of St. Catharines is about twelve miles west of the Niagara Falls. It is a lovely place with many shade trees and green lawns. The Queen Elizabeth Way goes through St. Catharines. The Welland Canal which is used by large steamers to go from Lake Erie up to Lake Ontario and farther north passes through the community. Large factories, in which many Mennonite Brethren people find employment, are found in this city.

The St. Catharines Mennonite Brethren Church was organized in September, 1943, with 66 members. Rev. G. J. Epp was the first pastor.

The church today has a membership of 350. It has a Sunday school of 20 classes. The church building, which today



St. Catharines Mennonite Brethren Church

seems to be too small for the rapid-growing city congregation, was erected in 1949.



Niagara Falls as Seen from the Canadian Side

The Niagara Falls, the largest waterfalls in the world when considered on the basis of the volume of water falling, are considered one of the seven wonders of the world. They are located in the Niagara River, which is an outlet for the waters of the Great Lakes by way of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River to the Atlantic Ocean. The Niagara River connects Lake Erie and Lake Ontario. Lake Erie lies considerably higher than Lake Ontario. The fall of the water occurs over a rock formation between the two lakes within the distance between Buffalo and Niagara, New York. The tremendous volume of water rushes down the upper rapids and then drops to the bottom of the falls, a distance of 165 feet, and rushes through the Gorge and Whirlpool until it reaches the peaceful inlet of Lake Ontario. Along the path of the water are many power stations producing power by channeling the mighty stream through tunnels to the power producing machines.

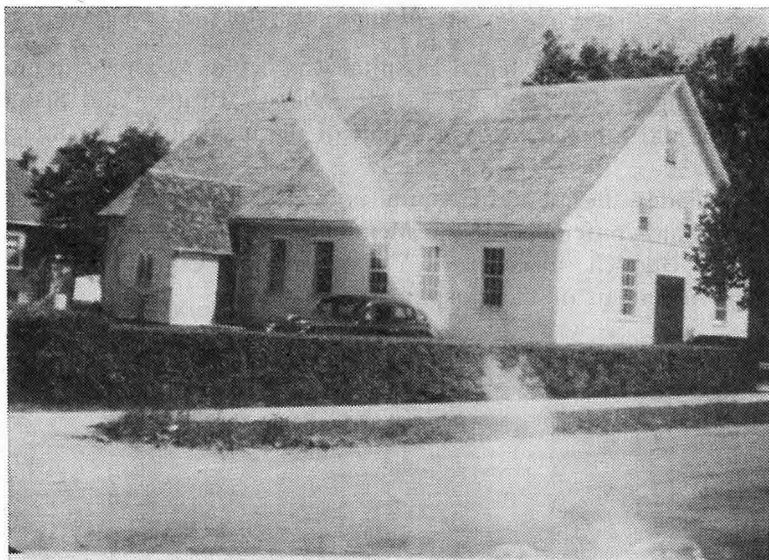
The Welland Canal is a connecting link between Lake Erie and Lake Ontario likewise. It is the passageway for large steamers delivering their cargoes to factories and seaports. By use of a system of locks in the canal, steamers going east are lifted about 300 feet between the lakes.

Vineland

Vineland is located on a stretch of land four to eight miles wide along the shore of Lake Ontario high enough only to keep out the water of the lake. The soil is especially adapted to fruit raising. The famous Concord grapes, peaches, plums, cherries, and other fruits and many kinds of vegetables are grown here and produce wonderful profits to the farmers. When the immigrants came to Canada, they found that land in this area could be had at a reasonable price and that the climate conditions were very agreeable. Some settled on the upland west of the lake where grain-growing and cattle-raising are the main occupations.

In 1935 a group of 27 members of the Mennonite Brethren Church organized the Vineland Church. Rev. D. Klassen was the first pastor.

The church today has 267 members. It has 13 Sunday school classes. Rev. H. P. Wiebe is the pastor.



Vineland Mennonite Brethren Church

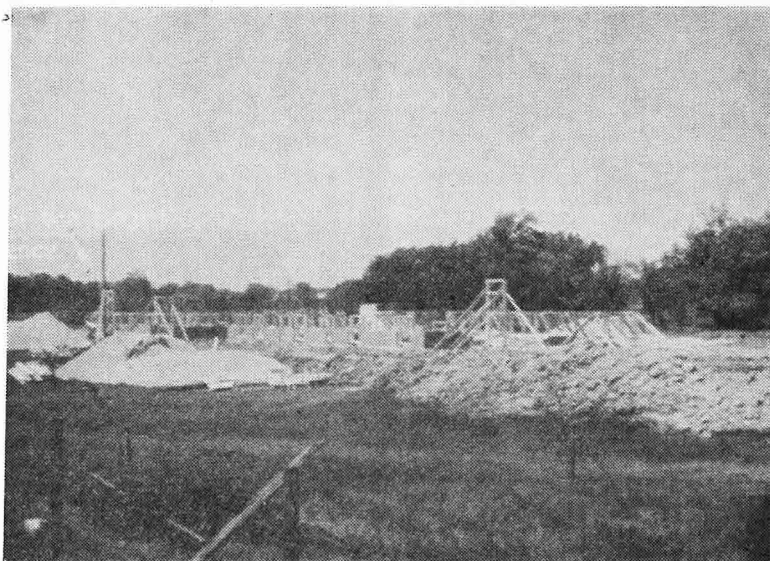


Bethesda Mental Hospital

Bethesda Mental Hospital

The Bethesda Mental Hospital was begun as a private undertaking by Rev. and Mrs. H. P. Wiebe. Brother and Sister Wiebe did a noble work in behalf of the mentally ill for many years.

Today the Mental Hospital is owned and operated by the Canadian Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church. Rev. H. G. Bartsch, formerly of Yarrow, British Columbia, is the Superintendent of the Hospital.

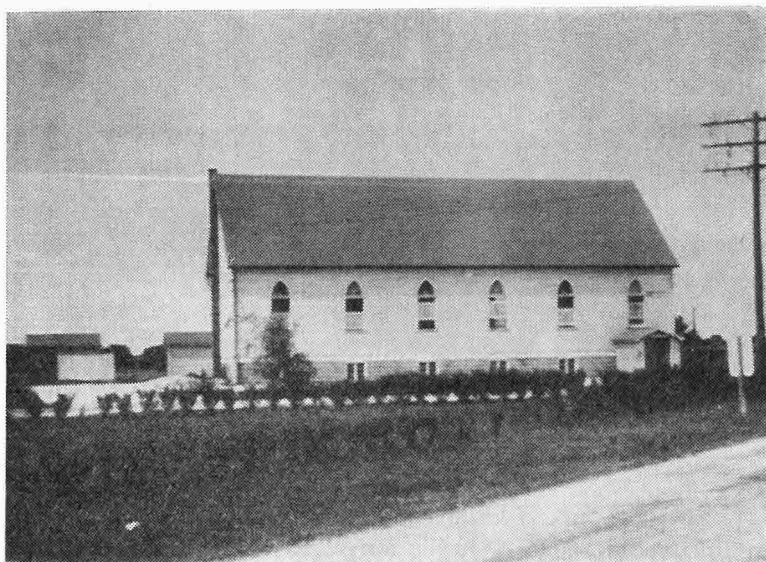


New Bethesda Hospital Under Construction

The new modern hospital building was constructed by the Canadian Conference. Rev. H. P. Wiebe was the Building Superintendent. Many days of voluntary labor were contributed by the members of the churches in this area in building this new home for mentally ill.

Virgil

Mennonites coming to Canada from Europe and others coming from the colder parts of Canada were attracted to the stretch of fertile farmland from 40 to 50 miles in length along



Virgil Mennonite Brethren Church

the south and west shores of Lake Ontario and established homes here.

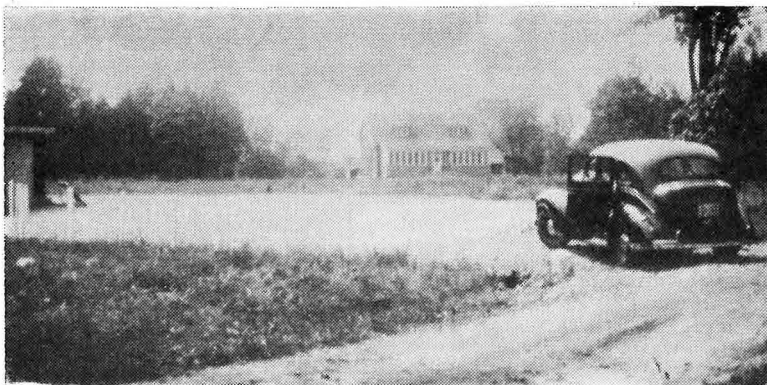
A number of the members of the Mennonite Brethren Church settled in the Niagara-on-the-Lake and the Virgil areas and soon became wealthy fruit growers. The community of Virgil is about eight miles from the Niagara Falls.

The Virgil Mennonite Brethren Church was organized in this area in May of 1927 with 37 members. The first leader of the group was Rev. John Dick.

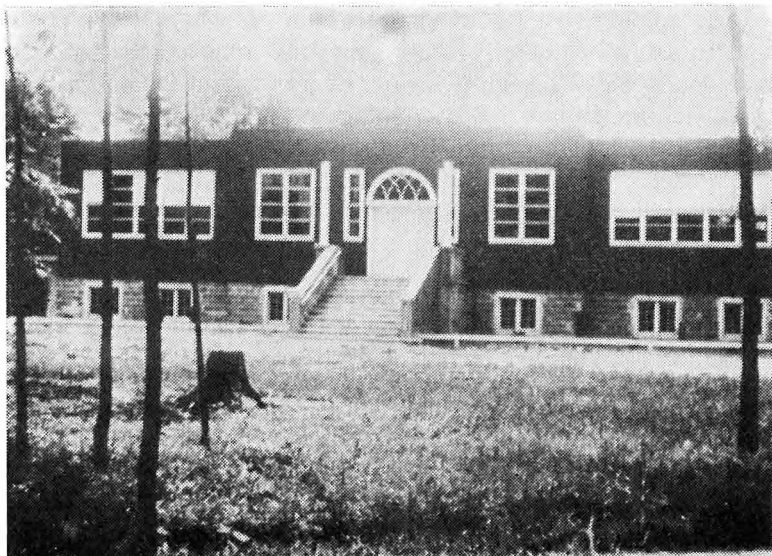
Today the church has 26 Sunday school classes and one mission Sunday school. Two missionaries have gone out from church to the foreign mission field. The membership is 419. Rev. Jacob P. Dick is he leader of the congregation.

Virgil Bible School

The Virgil Church operates a fine Bible School and campus for the young people interested in studying during the winter months. The buildings of the school include a classroom building and a dormitory.

**Virgil Bible School***Eden High School*

The churches of Ontario own and operate the Eden High School on the campus of the Virgil Bible School. The purpose of this program is to give the youth of the churches the opportunity to get a Christian education based on the doctrines of the Mennonite Brethren Church. Rev. D. Neumann of Rural Route 2, Niagara-on-the-Lake, is the principal of the school.

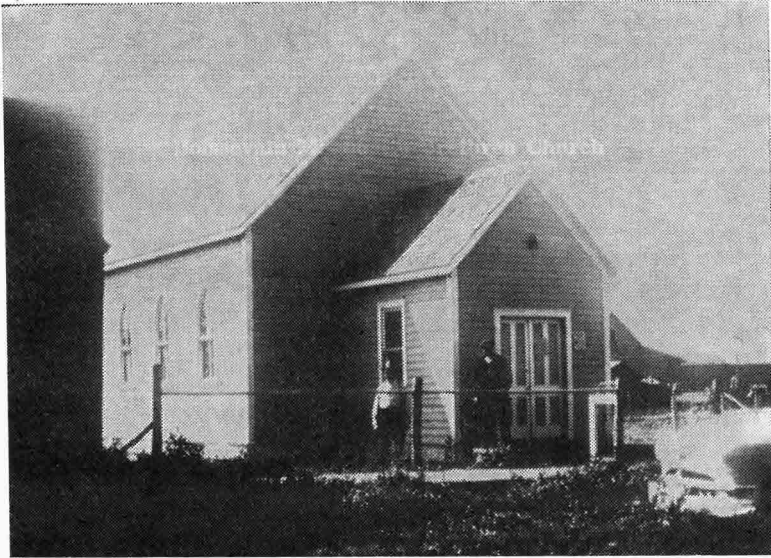
**Eden High School**

Chapter 10

THE MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCHES OF THE SASKATCHEWAN PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE

Saskatchewan belongs to the Canadian Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church. It has 23 Mennonite Brethren Churches. These constitute the Saskatchewan Provincial District Conference. The churches are also divided into the Northern or Rosthern District (Kreis) and the Southern or Herbert District (Kreis).

Blaine Lake

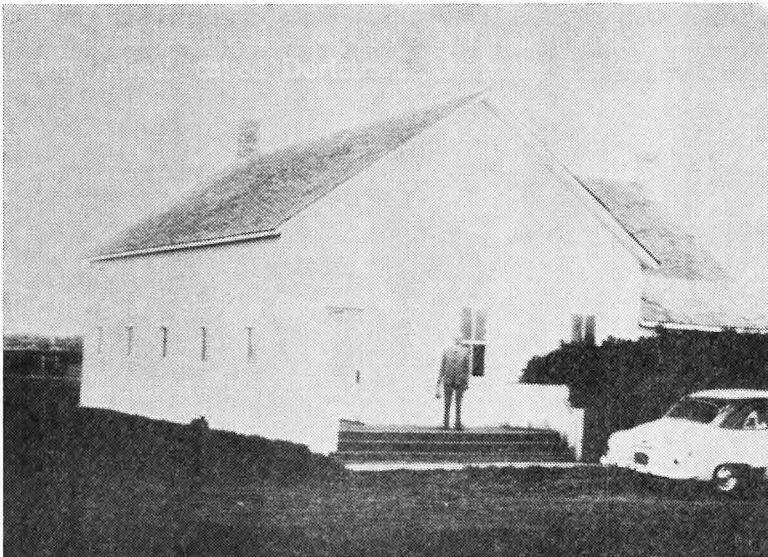


**Blaine Lake Mennonite Brethren Church
with Peter Janzen of Bruderfeld and a Russian man**

About 25 miles north of Hepburn is Blaine Lake where the Mennonite Brethren Conference has a small church building which was at one time used as a meeting house for Russian-speaking people in this area. There are no regular services conducted at this place at this time.

Borden

The town of Borden is located on Highway 5, which crosses Saskatchewan from the southeast to the northwest crossing the North Saskatchewan River near Borden by bridge rather than by ferry as was customary until recently. The Mennonite Brethren Church is located in the farming section on the north side of the river about six miles northeast of the town.



Borden Mennonite Brethren Church with Rev. Jacob Lepp, Dalmeny

The church at Borden was organized April 8, 1906, with 60 members present. Rev. David Klassen was the first pastor.

Today the church has 82 members. It has nine Sunday school classes. One couple has gone from the church into foreign mission service. Rev. Abraham K. Rempel is the pastor.

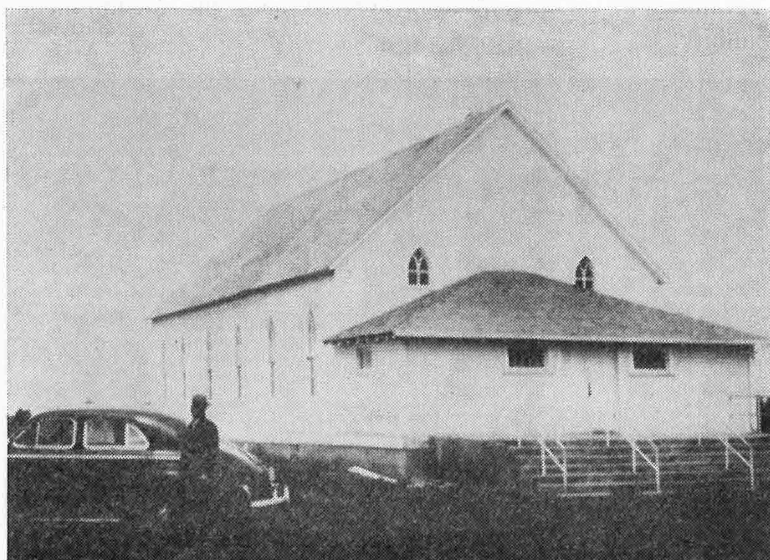
Bruderfeld

Mennonite Brethren Church members came to northern Saskatchewan in the early 1900's to find homes for themselves and their children. They settled on land that was homesteaded. To get started here was no get-rich-quick program, it meant a struggle for existence for many years, however, this part of

Saskatchewan furnished homes to hundreds of Mennonite settlers.

The rich soil in the community is excellent for grain-farming. The North Saskatchewan River nearby with its beautiful banks to the east and the wooded banks to the west even today shelters deer and other wild life. Much fishing has been done and is still being done in the river.

The first Mennonite Brethren building in Saskatchewan was erected about two miles west and 5 miles north of Hep-



Bruderfeld Mennonite Brethren Church

burn in the Bruderfeld community. A group of believers in 1902 organized as the Bruderfeld Mennonite Brethren Church under the leadership of Rev. Isaac Neufeld.

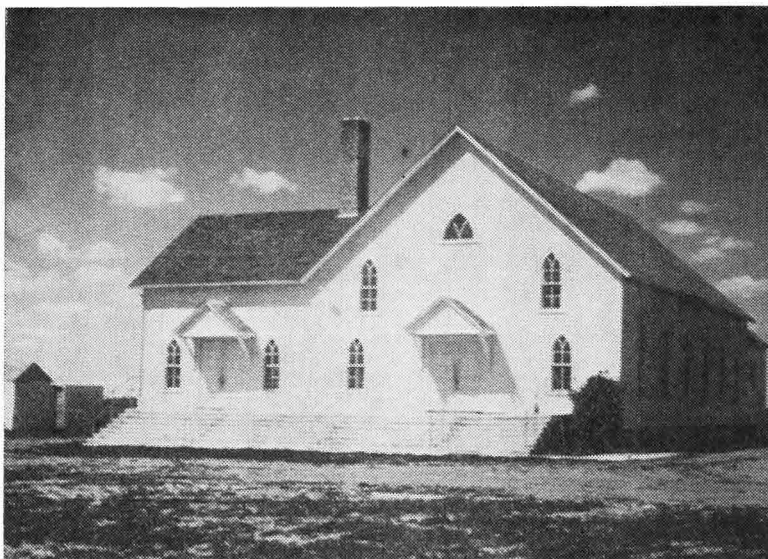
The church today has 81 members. There are 13 Sunday school classes. Hev. H. M. Willems is the pastor.

Dalmeny

Dalmeny is located on Highway 12 about 20 miles north of Saskatoon.

Into this area came John Baerg, who was a member of the Mennonite Brethren Church, Henderson, Nebraska, having

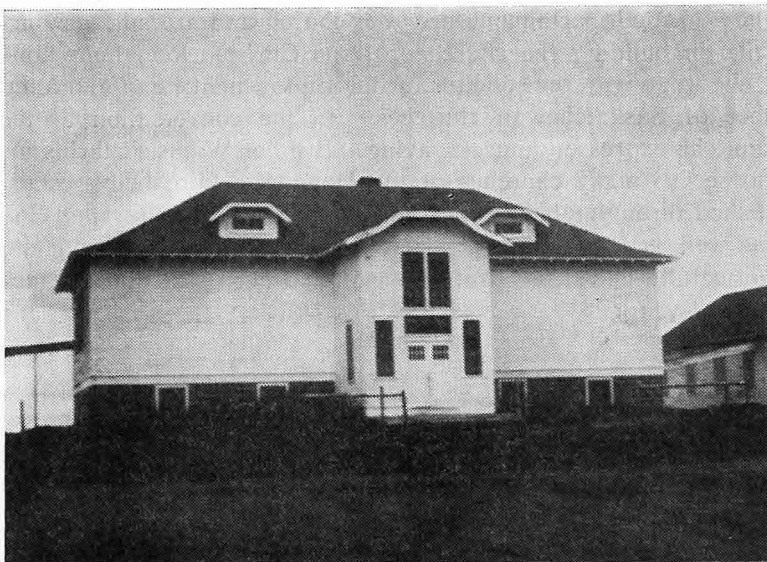
moved there from Boone County after the group in Boone County left. Brother Baerg sold his property in Nebraska and with his family settled in the Mennon district, where there was enough good land for him and his family at reasonable prices. He bought land for himself and a quarter section for each of his children so located that later each child could easily acquire another adjoining quarter. This location was far from a railroad or market place when the Baergs settled. Later, however, the railroad and railroad station were built on his land. Dalmeny was located near the Mennon community.



Dalmeny Mennonite Brethren Church

The church in this area was known as the Dalmeny Mennonite Brethren Church, although it was sometimes also called the Mennon Church. It was organized in 1901 with 24 members. Rev. Abram Buhler was the first pastor. In 1952 the church building was moved to Dalmeny, where a number of the retired members were residing.

Today the church has 258 members. There are 15 Sunday school classes. Four members serve as missionaries on the foreign field. Rev. Ernest Lepp is the leader.



Dalmeny Bible School

The Dalmeny Bible School, maintained by the church, offers the young people the advantages of a Bible training. A dormitory on the school grounds furnishes the students living quarters and dining quarters during the winter months.

Rev. F. J. Wiens, the former missionary to China, served as teacher of the school two years while on furlough.

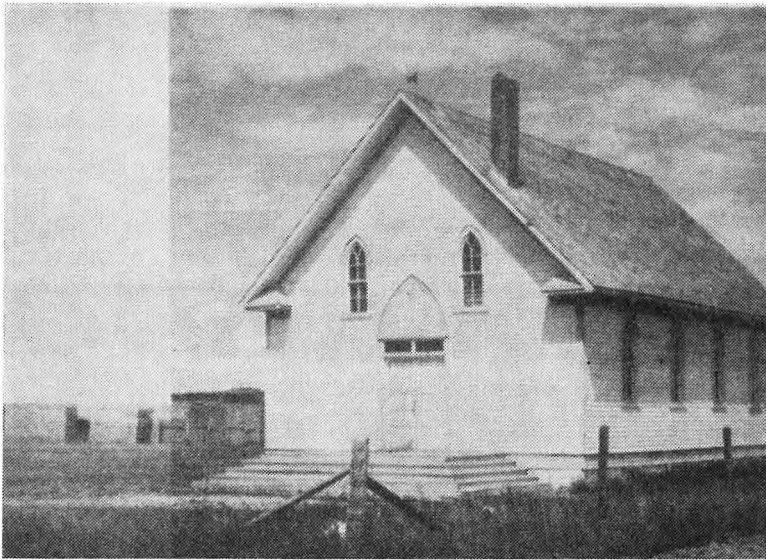


Rev. Jacob Lepp, Dalmeny, Saskatchewan

Rev. Jacob Lepp of Dalmeny for many years served as pastor of the Dalmeny Church. Brother and Sister Lepp are

now located in Dalmeny near the church and are still very active in building the church of Jesus Christ. Rev. Lepp took time to go with the solicitor for the Endowment Fund to a number of Saskatchewan churches. In the conversation at the time he expressed himself saying, "Brother Wiens, it thrills me to see so many churches of the Mennonite faith being established throughout the country. I want to keep on serving God as well as I know how." Here is an example of growing old gracefully and being useful to mankind even with the advancing of years.

Flowing Well



Flowing Well Mennonite Brethren Church

More and more people were moving to the west and north from Mennonite Brethren circles. The Herbert District attracted these people with the opportunity to homestead some of the finest farming land. A drawback in this area is that some years there has been an insufficient rainfall to assure crops.

Flowing Well is an ideal wheat-producing country located on Highway 19 about 18 miles south of the Trans-Canada Highway 1.

The Mennonite Brethren Church at Flowing Well was organized in 1908 with 23 members. Rev. John F. Harms was the first pastor.

The church today has six Sunday school classes. One member is a missionary on the foreign mission field. The membership of the church is 42. Rev. Wm. Buller is the pastor.

Glenbush



Glenbush Mennonite Brethren Church

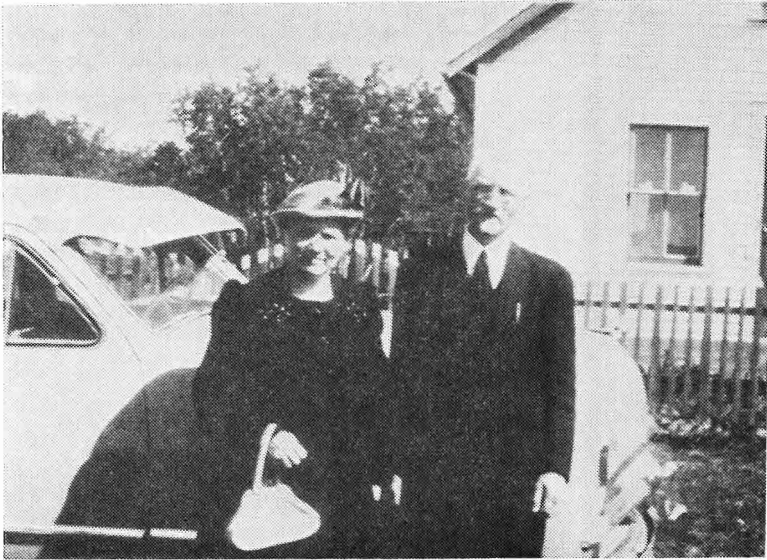
Glenbush is located 25 miles north and 15 miles east of North Battleford. Here is the Mennonite Brethren Church farthest north in Saskatchewan. Twenty-six years ago this part of the country was merely a heavy growth of poplar trees and other brush, which had to be cleared before the land could be brought under cultivation. Much hard work had to be done by the settlers before they could establish comfortable homes.

There is a Mennonite Brethren Church and a General Conference Mennonite Church at Glenbush.

The Mennonite Brethren Church was organized with 17 members July 15, 1928, under the leadership of Rev. N. H.

Pauls. In 1953 the church observed its twenty-fifth anniversary as well as the twenty-fifth anniversary of the leadership of Rev. Pauls in the church.

Today the church has a membership of 165. It has 12 Sunday school classes. The church is still under the leadership of Rev. Pauls.



Rev. and Mrs. N. H. Pauls, Glenbush, Saskatchewan

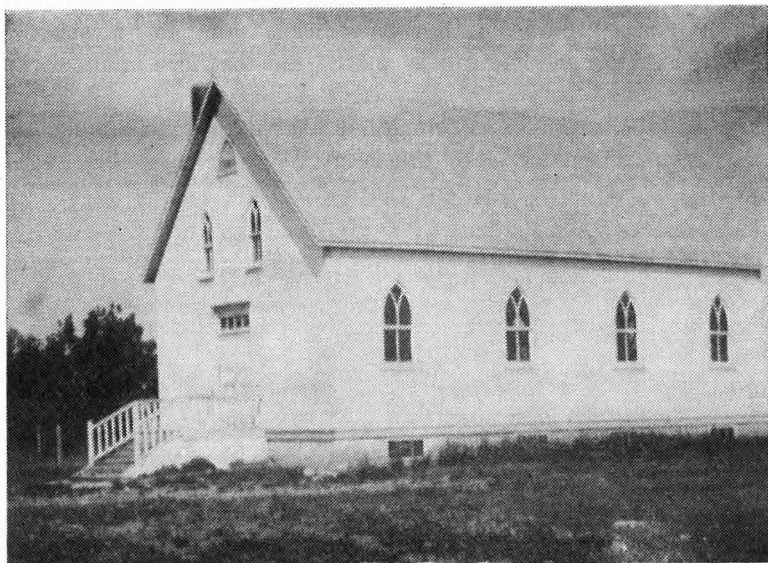
Rev. N. H. Pauls completed a quarter century of service as pastor of the Glenbush Church. Brother and Sister Pauls have their comfortable home located a few miles northeast of the church.

Greenfarm

Greenfarm is located about ten miles south and two miles east of Herbert in an area with a rich soil well adapted for wheat-growing. Occasional very dry years cause crop failures.

The Greenfarm Mennonite Brethren Church was organized in 1913 with 15 members. Rev. J. J. Thiessen was the first leader.

The church today has 67 members. Its Sunday school has ten classes. One member of the church is on the foreign mission field of another denomination. Rev. J. J. Thiessen is the pastor at this time and G. Penner the business leader.



Greenfarm Mennonite Brethren Church

Hepburn

A number of families in the early 1900's left the Henderson church in Nebraska, which often suffered losses to emigrations to newer settlements, to go north to Canada and take advantage of the homesteads offered by the Canadian government for very little cash. These Henderson emigrants settled in the Hepburn area.

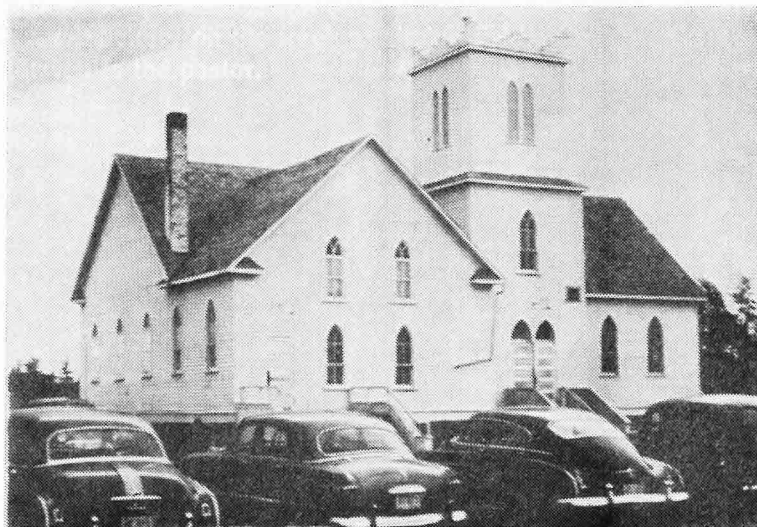
The North Saskatchewan River flows down from Edmonton, Alberta, dipping to near Saskatoon and then turning sharply to the north and east leaving Hepburn about 10 miles to the southeast. This river has on different occasions been the cause of heartaches by claiming the lives of swimmers caught in its treacherous holes.

The Hepburn Mennonite Brethren Church was organized in 1910 with 51 members. Rev. Peter J. Friesen, who came to Hepburn from Henderson, was the first pastor.

The church today has 17 Sunday school classes. Eight missionaries have gone from the church to the foreign mission field. The membership is 263. Rev. P. R. Toews is the pastor.

Hepburn has for many years had its Bible School. In recent years a new dormitory has been added to the school's facilities. Rev. J. H. Epp is one of the teachers in the Bible School.

A tabernacle to accommodate the North Saskatchewan District Conference and other large gatherings has been erected in Hepburn in recent years also.



Hepburn Mennonite Brethren Church

Herbert

Herbert is the center of the Herbert District in Saskatchewan. It is located on Highway 1.

The Herbert Church is one of the leading Mennonite Brethren Churches of the Herbert District. Four brethren represented the church at the convention of the General Conference in the Bingham Lake, Minnesota, Church in 1906. Rev. Benjamin Jantz was the leader of the church at that time. In the early days of the church the brethren Rev. H. A. Neufeld,



Rev. and Mrs. J. H. Epp of the Hepburn Bible School



Herbert Mennonite Brethren Church

Rev. Abraham Harms, Rev. J. F. Harms, Rev. David Dick, and others were active in the church.

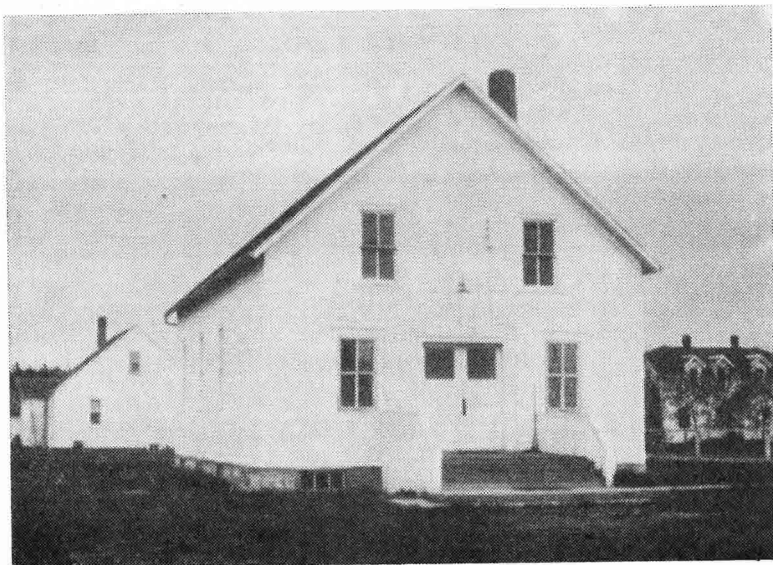
The church according to the 1951 Conference Yearbook has a membership of 180, which includes the group at Eyebrow. Rev. A. H. Kroeker is the leader.

A Bible School is located in Herbert which serves the district in offering the young people Bible instruction. Rev. W. J. Bestvater at one time was the teacher in the school.

Laird

The Laird Mennonite Brethren Church was established in 1899 with 50 members. Rev. Frank Siemens was the first pastor. The second pastor was Rev. J. B. Wiens.

Today the church has a Sunday school of seven classes.

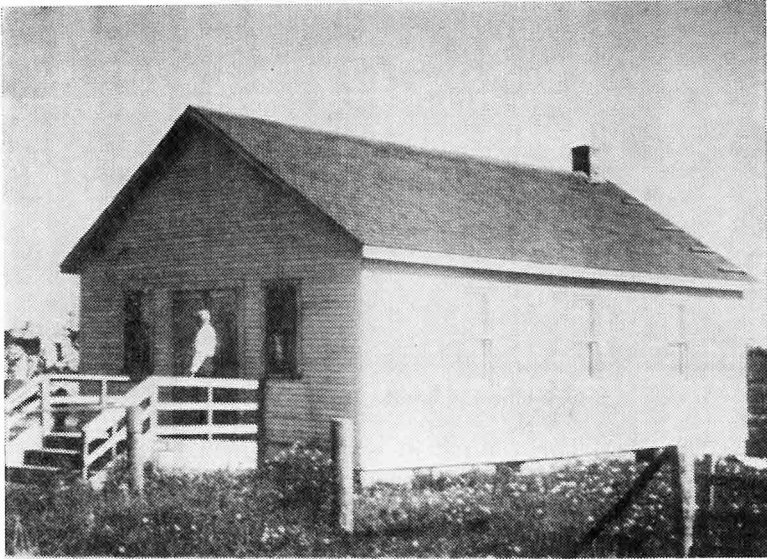


Laird Mennonite Brethren Church

Three missionaries are in the foreign mission field. The church has no pastor at the present time. Rev. Henry Speiser is the temporary leader. The membership at present is 45. The loss in membership since the beginning of the church is due to the moving away of members.

Lashburn

In 1936 a number of families moved to the far northwest corner of Saskatchewan. Here on Highway 5 and about 20 miles east of the Alberta border is the little town of Lashburn.



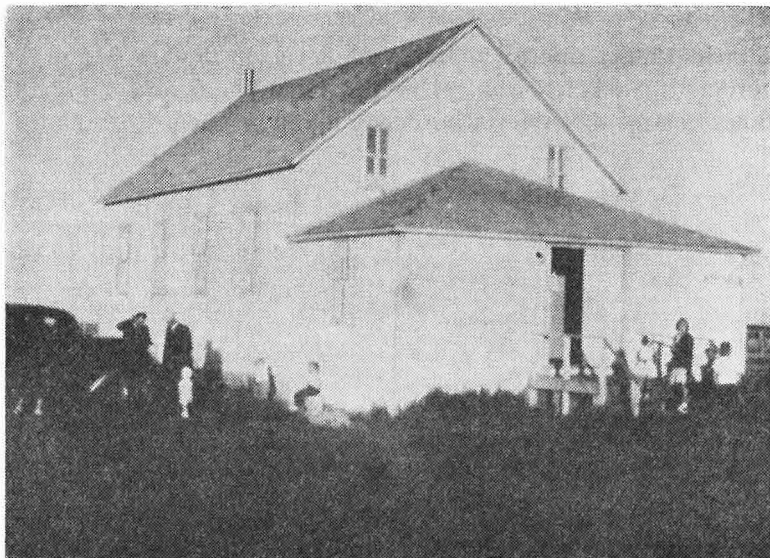
Lashburn Mennonite Brethren Church

The Lashburn Mennonite Brethren Church was organized with five members in 1936. Brother E. Gripp was the first leader and is the leader of the church today.

The church at present has 14 members. It has three Sunday school classes. Two members of the church are missionaries on the foreign mission field.

McMahon

Mennonite immigrants from Russia bought some of the large farms of the Sommerfelder Mennonites at the time when these moved to and settled in Old Mexico northwest of Durango because of their religious beliefs. These farms are considered some of the best wheat-growing lands on the Western Reserve of Canada.



McMahon Mennonite Brethren Church

The McMahon Church in which the Mennonite Brethren members who bought these farms worship is located 25 miles south and east of Swift Current. Some members of the church still live in the old-fashioned houses built by the Sommerfelder.

A church was organized here in the spring of 1927 with 21 members. Rev. Jakob Derksen was the first pastor. The church building is located in the center of the community with no town nearby.

Today the church has 27 members. It has five Sunday school classes. Three members are missionaries on the foreign mission field. Rev. H. F. Klassen is the pastor. Rev. Klassen is also the leader of the Herbert District Conference for the year 1954.

Maidstone

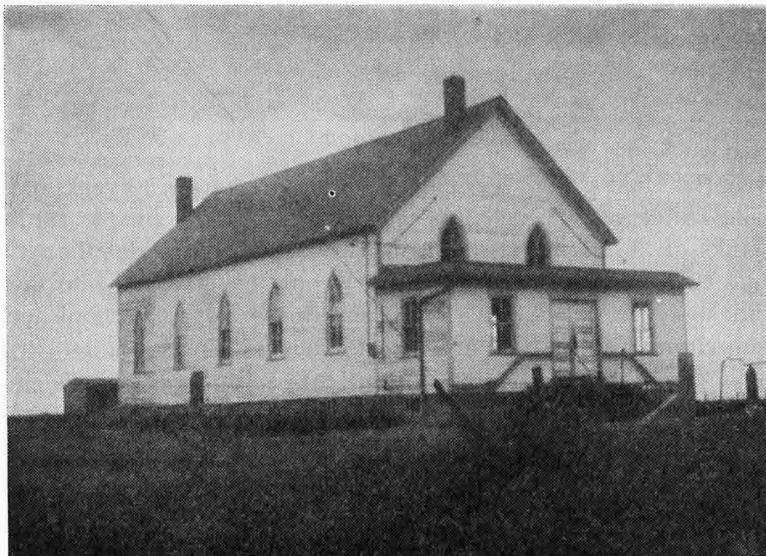
A group of believers in a community about 12 miles east of Lashburn organized as the Maidstone Mennonite Brethren Church. Rev. John Bettcher was the leader. In 1948 the membership was nine members. Since that time the church has no longer been listed as an independent church.



Maidstone Mennonite Brethren Church

Main Centre

The small country village of Main Centre is located about 20 miles north and a little west of Herbert. About seven miles



Main Centre Mennonite Brethren Church

farther north is the South Saskatchewan River making a dip farthest south and then swinging north until it runs through the city of Saskatoon 100 miles north. This mighty river played an important role when the early settlers came to Saskatchewan because of the dangers connected with crossing the very swift, deep, and wide river by ferry in the summers or on the ice in winters. Settlers with homes on the side of the river opposite their market places were constantly subject to the river's threats.

Those who settled these parts of Saskatchewan homesteaded or bought the fertile farmland in this area.

In the year of 1904 the Main Centre church was organized with 16 members under the leadership of Rev. Benjamin Jantz.

The church today has 224 members. It has a Sunday school program of 14 classes. Eleven members have gone from the church to the foreign mission field. Rev. John D. Goertzen is the pastor.

Redfield

Redfield is located eleven miles north and about 20 miles east of North Battleford. In years past there was an organized church at this location. Today there are only six members living in this remote place. The former church is operated as a mission.

Saskatoon

The fast-growing city of Saskatoon is barely 50 years old. The University of Saskatchewan is located here on the south banks of the South Saskatchewan River, which divides the city into two parts. Many Mennonite people have moved into this city to retire, others have come here to be close to school and church, and still others are here for business reasons.

The Mennonite Brethren Church in Saskatoon was organized with 35 members January 10, 1932. Rev. P. J. Funk was the first leader.

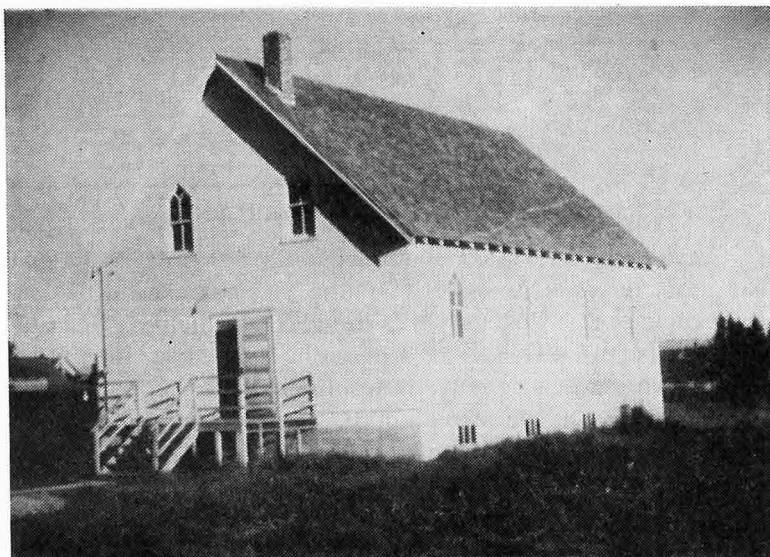
The church today has 239 members. There are eleven Sunday school classes and one extension project. Five couples from the church have gone to the foreign mission field as missionaries. Rev. Art Martens is the pastor.



Saskatoon Mennonite Brethren Church

Swift Current

Swift Current is located in the western part of Saskatchewan at the intersection of Highway 1 and Highway 4. High-



Swift Current Mennonite Brethren Church

way 1 furnishes a route for the people of the prairie provinces to go to the West Coast. Highway 4 runs north and south from the Canada-United States border north as far as Flatten Lake. Swift Current is about 20 miles west of Herbert.

The Swift Current Mennonite Brethren Church was organized in 1924. Rev. G. Warkentin was the first pastor.

The church today has seven Sunday school classes and a membership of 51. One member of the church is a missionary on the foreign mission field. Rev. P. J. Peters is the pastor.

Waldheim



Waldheim Mennonite Brethren Church

Waldheim is located about 34 miles north of Saskatoon and about ten miles west of Rosthern. Homeseekers from the south came to this Rosthern area to build their homes. A number came from the Henderson Church in Nebraska. Rev. David Dick, who had been active in Conference work in the United States and who at the Mennonite Brethren Conference at Henderson in 1887 was a delegate from the Lehigh Mennonite Brethren Church in Kansas, was among the settlers of this part of Saskatchewan.

A group of 78 members of the Mennonite Brethren faith united and organized as the Waldheim Mennonite Brethren

Church in 1918. Rev. David Dick was the leader of the group.

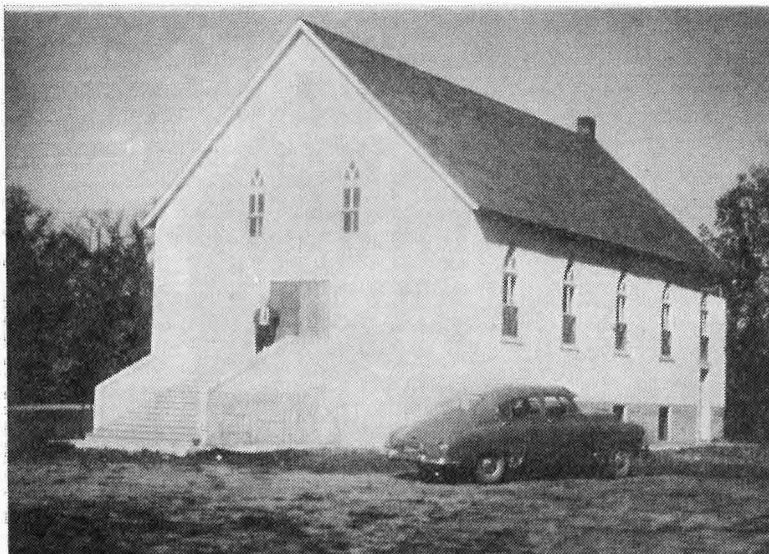
The church today has 87 members. There are eleven Sunday school classes. Rev. Jac. S. Adrian is the pastor.

Warman

The Warman Mennonite Brethren Church was organized in 1953 with 14 members. Rev. Norman Fehr is the pastor. The church has six Sunday school classes and one extension station. This place was formerly a mission station operating with the help of the Saskatoon Church. Three missionaries are still active at this place.

Watrous

A group of immigrants and displaced persons coming from Russia in the middle of the 1920's found homes in an area about 20 miles south and east of Watrous. The church building is located on Highway 14, crossing the plains of eastern Saskatchewan up to the Manitoba border, about 70 miles south and east of Saskatoon. Between the church building and Watrous is the Manitou Health Resort where people come for mineral baths and cures from various ailments.



Watrous Mennonite Brethren Church

The church at Watrous was organized in February of 1928 with 30 members. Rev. Peter D. Janzen was the first pastor.

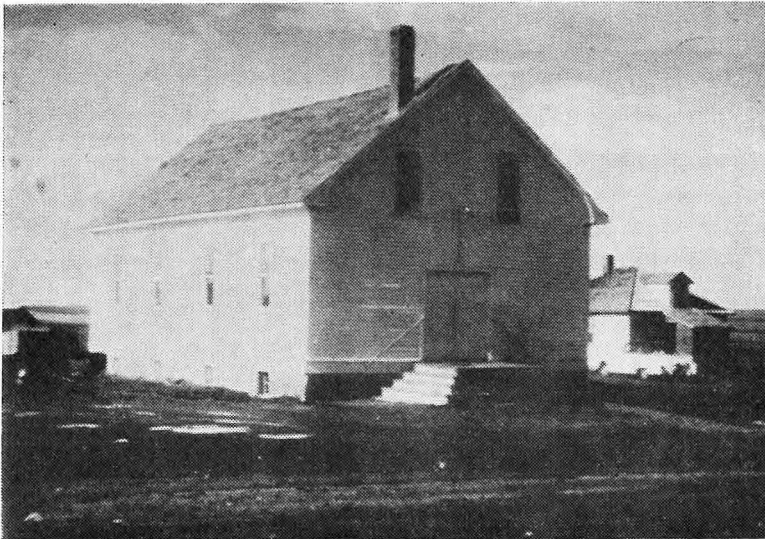
The church today has eight Sunday school classes. One missionary has gone out to the foreign mission field. The membership is 88. Rev. Jacob Dick is the pastor.

Woodrow

The increase in Mennonite families, for now the children of the first settlers were grown and married bringing new families into the group, meant new needs for more and more farms to furnish the opportunities for a livelihood. Between the years 1900 and 1913 there was a great influx of settlers in the northwest. In 1915 a group of Mennonite Brethren church members established themselves in the neighborhood of Woodrow as the community of Mennonite Brethren farthest south in Saskatchewan. Woodrow is on Highway 13 about 40 miles south and 65 miles east of Swift Current.

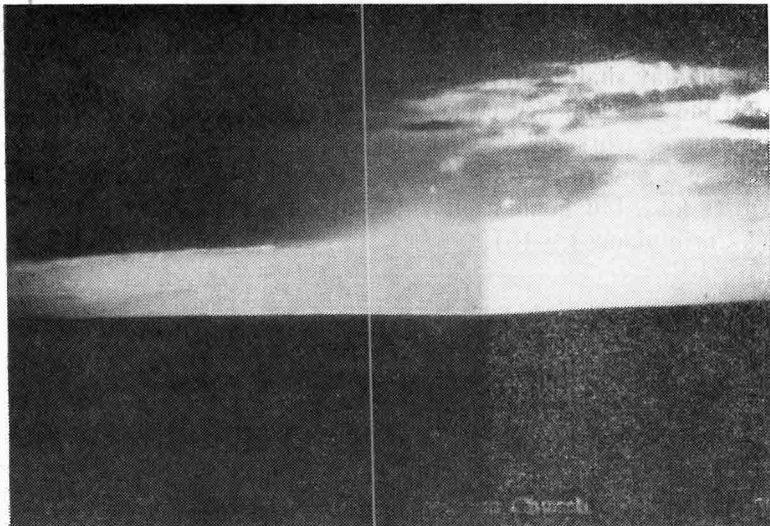
The church at Woodrow was organized in 1915 with 15 members. The brethren Ollenburger and Reimche were the first pastors and leaders.

Today the group has six Sunday school classes. There are 64 active members. Rev. J. E. Kehler is the pastor.



Woodrow Mennonite Brethren Church

SUNSET



We have viewed the churches of the Mennonite Brethren Conference, their locations and surroundings and a brief history of each with directions telling how to get there.

There may be errors in the mileages given from place to place, even names and figures in some instances may not be correct. For these and other errors that may have occurred, I apologize.

My wish and prayer is that this book may be an inspiration to our people, inspiring them to work more earnestly and faithfully ere "the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4).

The churches, the pastors and members, are united with the workers on the foreign mission field and with the workers on the home mission field—"all one body we"—in the great task of building the Church of Jesus Christ until He comes to receive His Church unto Himself.

The Apostle Paul speaks of building the Church. "For we are labourers together with God: Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foun-

dation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (I Corinthians 3:9-15).

Work, for the night is coming,
Under the sunset skies;
While their bright tints are glowing
Work for daylight flies;
Work, till the last beam fadeth,
Fadeth to shine no more;
Work, while the night is dark'ning,
When man's work is o'er.

—Anna L. Coghill.



